

Working towards good mental health and well-being

## ABOUT US

From its inception in 1963, AMH has grown to be one of the largest mental health and learning disability organisations in the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. We have an established track record in providing a range of unique high quality services helping more than 1700 people every year across the region.

Our services include AMH New Horizons, AMH Accept, AMH Vote, AMH Promote, AMH MensSana, and AMH The Junction.

## VISION STATEMENT

A community in which people with mental health needs or a learning disability are valued and empowered to achieve their full potential.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of life and employability of people with mental health needs or a learning disability by promoting social inclusion through the provision of training and support services.

WORKING

IT OUT



## AMH VALUES

AMH is a people centred organisation

Clients are the core of our existence

Staff are the core of our success

We strive for excellence

We celebrate diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity

We nurture partnerships

We strive to sustain and grow our organisation

We are committed to the highest standards of:

Integrity

Professionalism

Transparency

Accountability

SUPPORT  
FOCUS  
SUCCESS



# 01. WELCOME

This year our theme is **“Working it Out!”**  
- working towards good mental health & wellbeing.

Good mental health is fundamental to the health and well-being of every person. We all have mental health, some people define it as a state of mind, others view it as being content with life or feeling good about yourself. Mental health is perhaps best explained as how well we cope with daily life and the challenges it brings. When our mental health is good, we can more fully enjoy and appreciate the people and environment around us. We respond better to the stresses and challenges of daily life; we are more creative, use our abilities to the fullest and make the most of opportunities. When our mental health is poor, it can be difficult to function in our daily lives.

There is growing evidence that health, work and wellbeing are closely and powerfully linked and need to be addressed together. At AMH we provide our clients with many opportunities to be as active as possible, physically, socially and mentally. We encourage them to adopt a healthier lifestyle and to widen their social networks. We also provide them with the tools to build a better future, set personal goals, learn coping skills, and become more employable.

The services we provide at AMH are in line with Government Policy. We are committed to promoting positive health and wellbeing. We are supporting our clients to lead independent lives by providing services that meet their needs.

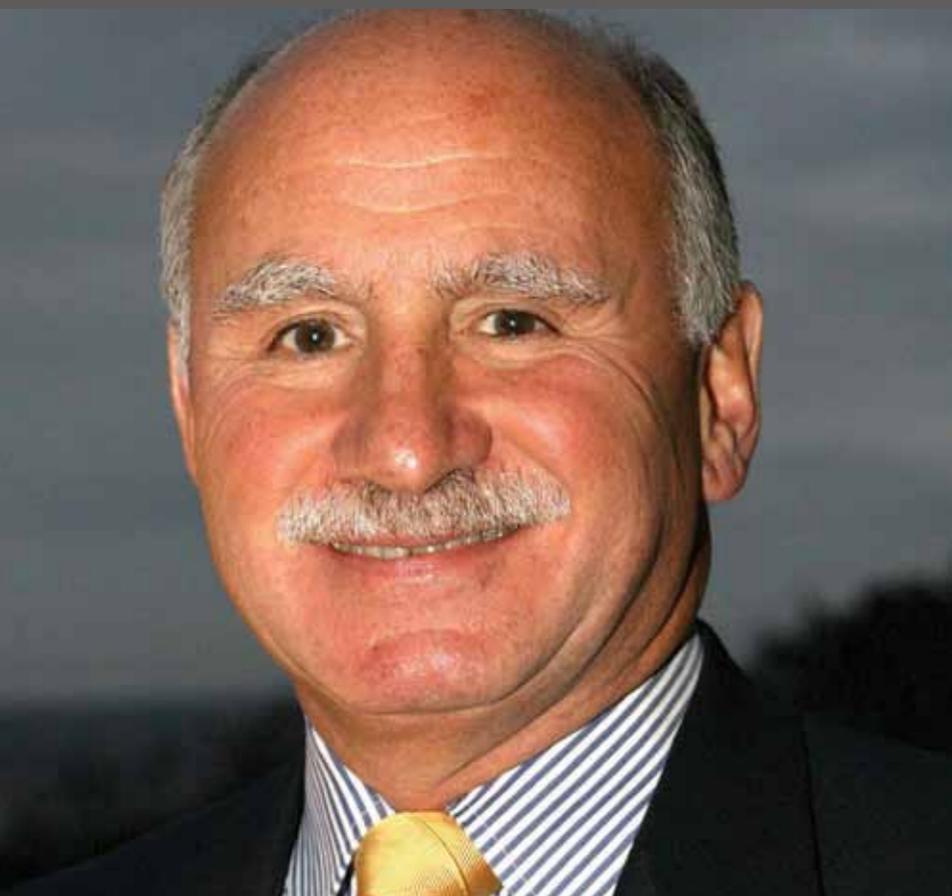
We are helping them build a positive and meaningful future. We are promoting the positive links between health and work and helping move people with mental health issues to find and stay in employment. We are giving those who lack work experience, the opportunity to develop confidence and skills in a work environment through employment programmes, volunteering and supported work environments.

The following client stories and service reports illustrate how our clients are “Working it Out” with AMH, whether it be through personal development training, work placements, living a healthier lifestyle, or developing friendships and social networks - all of which are having a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

CONFIDENCE  
PROSPERITY



## 02. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



The theme of this year's Annual Report "Working it Out! - working towards good mental health and wellbeing" is an apt one in the current climate. There is no doubt that when our mental health is good we respond better to the stresses and challenges of life and make better use of our opportunities.

The tough times ahead will result in considerable stresses and challenges for many and the work of AMH is all the more relevant and vital in addressing mental health needs. We provide our clients with many opportunities to be as active as possible, physically, socially and mentally. We provide them with the tools to build a better future and become more employable.

Apart from providing vocational and lifeskills training for an increasing number of clients, AMH is expanding its promotion

of positive mental health, both in the workplace and in school and youth environments.

At a time of economic uncertainty and threatened public expenditure cuts, the AMH Board is determined to ensure the sustainability of the services we provide to our clients.

During the summer of 2009 we started exploratory discussions with the Board of The Cedar Foundation on the possibility of closer collaboration with the aim of strengthening both organisations. The synergy between AMH and Cedar is strong; we have worked well together for many years. At the end of the year under review, the AMH Board commissioned an independent study of the rationale for a merger or other form of collaboration. The conclusion was that we should seek a merger subject to further in-depth examination of the business case.

This work will continue well into 2010/11 before the Board takes a final decision.

During the year the Board met on 4 occasions and the Finance & General Purposes Committee held 6 meetings. At each meeting all aspects of the work of AMH was carefully examined with particular emphasis on performance against the budget and service delivery targets. The year end results were more than satisfactory with a modest financial surplus and excellent performance by our services.

The Board is informed by the Audit Committee whose advice is greatly valued. Indeed I am indebted to all the members of our Committees and the Board for their wide ranging experience and expertise which they contribute to our business.

2010 sees the retirement of Ian Walters, our chief executive

since 2002. Ian has made a huge contribution to the organisation. His tireless efforts and superb motivation of his team have resulted in continuing improvement of the service and the exceptional development of the staff, who have grown in ability and confidence under his guidance. He has served the Board well and expanded the organisations links and reputation. I would like to thank him, both personally and on the Board's behalf, and to wish him health and happiness in his retirement.

I would also like to welcome David Babington, who joins us in these exciting times. No doubt, with his help and that of our excellent staff, we will continue to serve our clients well in the future.

**H W R Kohner**  
Chairman

## 03. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

We talk frequently about living in challenging times and 2009/10 was certainly one of those periods. It was a year when the full effect of the recession combined with public expenditure cuts demanded a response to ensure the achievement of our objectives. I am very pleased to say that we succeeded.

AMH's success during the year is perhaps no better demonstrated than in the client stories you will read in this report. It was also evident in the celebrations of the achievements of our clients at our annual award ceremonies held throughout AMH. Broadly speaking we achieved the targets set out in our Operational Plan and European Social Fund contract.

One of our aims is to develop services closer to the communities we serve through outreach

centres. During 2009/2010 we introduced IT training delivered in partnership with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in North Belfast. Plans for the Well2 project based in Downpatrick also made good progress.

Other highlights of the year included another very successful Tughan Lecture delivered by Dr. Nick Baylis on the theme "Enhancing Employability" which was well received by those attending. The Canal Street, Newry office was officially opened by Mrs. Fionnuala Cook, an AMH Patron.

The delivery of high quality services and a determination to improve lie at the heart of everything we do. During the year Fermanagh New Horizons achieved the Government's Customer Service Excellence

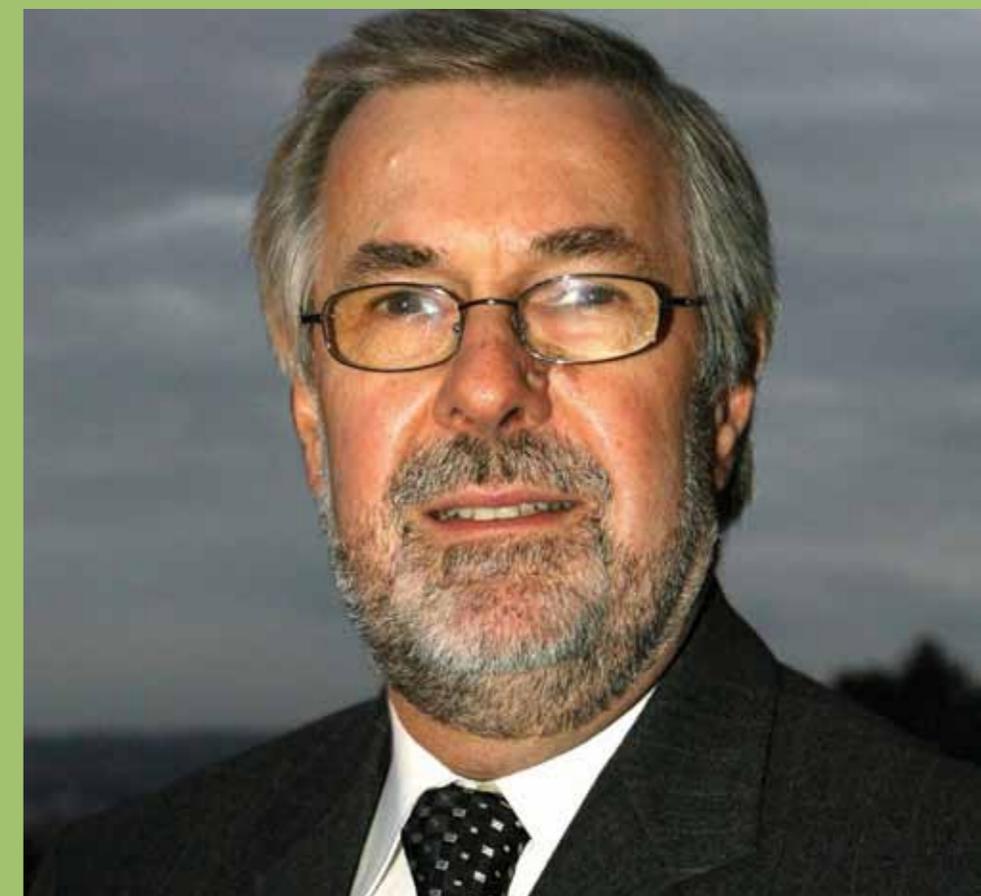
(CSE) standard with 100% compliance. Craigavon New Horizons and AMH Promote followed hot on Fermanagh's heels and also achieved success. Towards the end of the year we prepared for our Investors in People re-assessment and were later rewarded with the achievement of Gold status.

This is the last introduction I will write for the AMH Annual Report. My retirement is imminent! During the last 8 ½ years it has been my privilege to lead the AMH team and I have been proud to do so. Their success has been outstanding by any measure and I am very grateful for everything they have done. I will miss them and our clients for whom we exist. I am also grateful to the Chairman and Board for their support and the time they give generously to the work of AMH.

I wish my successor, David Babington and the team continued success as they chart their way through the changes which lie ahead. I will follow AMH's progress with close interest and pleasure that I was allowed to play a part during my time here.

I leave them with my very best wishes.

**Ian Walters**  
Chief Executive



## 04. MEET OUR PATRONS



**Nuala McKeever**

It sometimes seems that successful people are those who "have it all" – money, status, perfect health and no problems.

But we know that that's a bit of a Hollywood fantasy and that a) there's no-one who doesn't have some problems to deal with in life and b) having the perfect circumstances isn't a guarantee of happiness either.

For me, success isn't measured by what you've got, but in how you deal with what you've got.

This year's theme – Working It Out! – goes right to the heart of that. We all have different circumstances. Sometimes the circumstances are really challenging – no work, little income, few friends, low self-esteem, insecurity or poor physical health.

But when we take the support that's on offer, we realise quite often that the circumstances themselves aren't the biggest

problem – it's feeling powerless that is. And with support, we become less powerless and more powerful.

Action Mental Health offers support with personal development, physical health, work and social interaction and networking. Taking that support, working it out, being active in your own life – that's what I call success.

Here's to a year filled with success for all of us!



**Anne McCollum CBE DL**

I recently had the pleasure and privilege of presenting over one hundred certificates to clients from AMH New Horizons in Antrim.

The Client Certificate Presentation Day is a very happy occasion as staff and clients celebrate the fruits of their hard work and dedication over the previous year, indeed sometimes many years,

and I thoroughly enjoyed being part of that day of celebration.

The event was opened much to the delight of the guests and certificate recipients by TV personality Lynda Bryan, a fellow "patron" of AMH. The highlight of the event for me, and I think I can vouch for Lynda as well, was the address by former client, Jillian Tullis, who spoke of her experiences as a client and her journey, on completing her training, of finding employment.

It wasn't an easy journey requiring a tenacity and determination which was both moving to listen to and was surely extremely encouraging and indeed inspirational for fellow-clients many of whom are now facing the prospect of seeking a job.

Today, when we are constantly

reminded by the media that we are in recession, that unemployment is high and people are being made redundant and losing their jobs, this presents a gloomy picture for clients as they embark on their search for work.

Fortunately there are firms which support AMH, based throughout Northern Ireland, in their aim to find suitable employment and placements for those who have successfully completed qualifications and employment programmes.

It is hoped that Prime Minister David Cameron's call for the "Big Society" includes those in our community who are disadvantaged by mental health problems and learning disabilities, and that the heroic work of organisations like AMH is recognised and supported.



**Fionnuala Cook OBE BA**

The client stories and service reports that appear in this year's Annual Report are evidence of how AMH is helping our clients to "Work it Out!"

As a parent of a mental health patient, I have seen at first hand the work carried out at AMH and appreciate the care and support offered. The range of courses and training opportunities, we hope, provide something for all our clients, no matter what their aspirations and ambitions are – everyone is different and we encourage personal growth and positive change.

I had the pleasure this year of officially opening the AMH New Horizons service in Canal Street in Newry. This marked another milestone in the development of AMH who have been providing a much needed service to clients in the Newry & Mourne area for the past twenty years.

AMH recognises the changing needs of our clients and the support necessary to equip them with relevant and desirable qualifications and opportunities of further education so they are able to enhance their lives both socially and professionally.



**Lynda Bryans**

Everyone has emotional and mental health needs. Maintaining good mental health is so important because it influences how we think and feel about ourselves as well as others. It can also affect how we deal with everyday life events, such as relationships and coping with change.

Looking after our mental wellbeing is just as vital as looking after our physical wellbeing. Some years ago, a temporary mental illness resulted in my not being able to work for around 8 months. I'd lost confidence during this time and it was a real challenge trying to gradually find that sense of worth again.

Remember – you are not alone – AMH are helping many people, who find themselves in the same situation, to connect with society in many positive and meaningful ways for example through work experience or further education or through social activities, such as, sports, music and crafts.

I am delighted to hear of the Employers' Forum in Newry which has been set up to support clients and provide work placements, I

only hope other employers will do the same and help our clients get back on their feet.

I am so proud of all of our clients who have worked so hard during the year despite the many barriers and difficulties they face. I am sure the stories in this years report will inspire and encourage others to believe in themselves.

I would encourage you to read on and find out more about the learning, training and support available through AMH and maybe even take up one of the courses or take part in the activities on offer to help prepare you for any future opportunity when it comes along.

## 05. NEW HORIZONS

AMH New Horizons helps people to overcome the effects of mental ill health and in many cases return to work. We offer a range of recognised qualifications and provide training, personal development programmes and social and recreational activities. We operate 8 New Horizons services in 11 locations and increasingly deliver a variety of courses in community based venues.

### ANTRIM

In June 2009 we secured funding from the Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) to deliver our Community Pharmacy Programme called 'My Health My Choice'. The programme aims to raise awareness of the wider health issues which have an impact on clients and encourage them to independently access alternative community services that can support them to manage their own health needs.

"My Health My Choice" participants complete an OCN accredited Healthy Living qualification, agree on relevant topics for the Pharmacist led sessions and design a bespoke programme of activities e.g. badminton, basketball, fitness programmes.

The high level of interest generated amongst participants has filtered down through the service and resulted in the introduction of our weekly 5-A-Side Football activity and the consolidation and growth of the walking group. Twenty clients have currently completed

the programme and its success is highlighted by excellent client feedback and a long waiting list.

The launch of My Health My Choice was held in February 2010 and was an opportunity for clients to try new health and well being activities such as Salsacise, Pilates and Reflexology. The event also welcomed the Action Cancer Big Bus which was available on site all day offering full health checks. The day was supported by outside agencies and community organisations whose stands provided a variety of information and advice and was an excellent opportunity to build new links and

networks as well as promote the work of AMH.

The accredited training programme has developed and grown rapidly with clients engaged in OCN courses such as Developing Personal Confidence, Stress Management, Money Management, Cook-IT and Drugs Awareness. We continue to offer NVQ training in Catering, Horticulture and Business Administration. In 2009, we introduced an NVQ Level 2 in Catering and also in Horticulture to enable clients to progress further in their chosen fields. The achievements of Clients were recognised at the Certificate presentation event in July 2009 when 135 certificates for accredited qualifications were awarded.

The Employment Officers continue to nurture relationships and forge new contacts with referral agents such as the Pathways Advisors in the Jobs and Benefits Offices. The team



has also continued to strengthen links with the Community Mental Health Teams and Conditional Management Programme (CMP) Practitioners. Three OCN Personal Career Preparation courses were delivered in Cookstown, Magherafelt and Ballymena to improve clients' employment opportunities.

Despite the difficult economic climate, new training placements have also been sourced, for example in B&Q and Barnaby's Restaurant. Our Horticulture Department has developed a working partnership with Barnaby's, producing and

supplying them with winter and summer vegetables and herbs.

Two clients secured training placements to maintain the restaurants polytunnel and to support Barnaby's to providing locally grown produce to their own customers.

We hope to build on this relationship in the future as catering and hospitality placements may also be offered to clients. This community initiative is supported by celebrity chef James Martin, and clients enjoyed a day recently when they were able to meet and chat to James about their experiences.

## RONNIE - WORKING IT OUT!

My name is Ronnie and I was recently diagnosed, at the rather late age of 46, with suffering from a mental illness. For the record my illness is Bipolar Affective Disorder. I will try to give you a brief insight into how all this came about.

Over many years I had tried to come to terms with several suicides within my immediate family. I never sought the help I should have, and to cut a long story short, recently tried to take my own life. It was then that I was transferred to Tobernaven Centre where I spent some 14 weeks. Initial diagnosis was repressed grief but as they delved deeper, further assessment pronounced me as being Bipolar.

I was determined to make good use of my time in Holywell and participate in the many and varied activities available to patients. This I would advise to anyone who finds themselves in such a situation as it proves you are trying to integrate with society again.

On my discharge I was living apart from my wife and sons and

though I saw them frequently I found this a particularly hard time. It was then that the aftercare started and within a very short time from discharge, I was assigned to see a psychologist. My psychologist was Dr. Adam Elliot and I met him weekly. He gave me a book 'A Special Scar' to read, written by and for survivors of suicide and I found this very beneficial. Over the following months as we got to know each other, I found him a great help.

As I write this, I have just had my last session with Adam and he has discharged me from Psychological Therapies Service with a glowing reference.

About 4 months previous to this I was also contacted by Action Mental Health and in particular a girl called Patricia Kelly. Patricia

and I discussed the importance of routine and behavioural activation and she encouraged me to explore voluntary or part-time employment. I must emphasise Patricia was never-ending in her quest for employment and secured me a position at a local hotel on a training placement basis.

Things went well for about 6 weeks and then Patricia secured me gainful employment within the hotel and I am still working there within my allowance of therapeutic earnings. So you see things aren't all doom and gloom if you're prepared to be helped and help yourself.

Take me for example - this all happened within a calendar year and now I'm back living with my family, in paid employment and most importantly I look forward to each day.



## HELEN - WORKING IT OUT!

Hello everyone, my name is Helen and I am 28 years old. In 2008 I became unwell and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. During my time in hospital I was referred to AMH New Horizons in Antrim. At the start, I have to admit, I wanted to go back to my old job but I decided to stick it out and I got on really well. I did lots of courses. I was interested in computers and reception duties.

I was supported to develop my own Personal Learning Programme and over the course of the next two years I successfully completed OCR Clait and the Clait Diploma with the skills coach in the computer suite. I also participated in OCN accredited courses in Personal Career Preparation, Introduction to Practical Floristry Skills, Developing Personal Confidence & Self Awareness,

Healthy Living and Personal Budgeting & Money Management.

My favourite course at the unit was the Community Pharmacy Programme called "My Health My Choice" which was a twelve week project focusing on health and wellbeing with support from the local pharmacist. I enjoyed this project so much as it included a variety of physical activities and enabled me to understand the work of my local pharmacy and how they can support me to manage my own health needs.

At present in New Horizons I have responsibility for reception duties one day each week and I also enjoy participating in the weekly walking group. In November 2009 I met with the Employment Officer based in the unit as I felt ready to undertake a voluntary work

placement. We worked together to identify suitable placements and I am now a volunteer with a local charity shop two mornings a week. I really enjoy the placement and hope to continue to help out there for another year or so.

I will be leaving New Horizons very soon but I will really miss coming here as it is like a second home to me. I will still have support from the Employment Officer through my voluntary placement with the future goal of returning to full time employment. I feel the support I have received through Action Mental Health and the skills I have learnt by attending New Horizons will enable me to continue having a focus on employability whilst maintaining positive mental and physical wellbeing.

Thanks for reading my story.



LIFESKILLS  
INDEPENDENCE

## BELFAST

With our focus on promoting employability and personal achievement for our clients, the economic climate this year presented some significant challenges to the Belfast service. However, as a wise person once said, 'you can't change the direction of the wind, but you can adjust your sails.' There was plenty of evidence of this throughout the year, as despite the challenges posed, 9 clients progressed into paid employment and 17 clients commenced voluntary work. The work of AMH staff in facilitating these achievements is noteworthy, along with over 380 accredited training outcomes achieved by clients in the Belfast service.

There were also successful training placements with a wide range of employers including Homebase, Tesco, Oscars, Open Arts, Save the Children, ASDA and Oxfam. These placements are an indication of the strong relationships our Employment Officers Sonia Erwin and Michele Leitch, have developed with local employers. Two well attended employers' forums throughout the year also provided important learning and networking opportunities.

As well as a platform for progression to employment, a variety of training initiatives supported personal development and achievement. NVQ training programmes in Retail, Catering and Administration facilitated

successful achievement of above targeted Level 1 & 2 outcomes. The best time to visit us continues to be at lunchtime, with high quality food being served by our catering team of clients and skills coach, Colette McDowell.

Accredited training in areas such as Digital Photography, Health & Safety, Food Hygiene and Personal Confidence, was successfully delivered throughout the year, while music groups, art classes and DJ skills workshops catered for the more creative among us!

IT training continues to be a popular choice for many of our clients and the training delivery was multifaceted, and targeted

at various levels of competency, from our 'Intro to IT' programmes through to the more advanced CLAiT and ECDL training. We also welcomed a new IT Skills Coach (Victoria Bradshaw) and General Skills Coach (Bobby Cunningham) into the service.

Employability training provided a natural progression for clients into our Employment Programme and a variety of accredited training was delivered in areas such as CV development, job searching and interview skills. Applied knowledge and practical skills development were the cornerstones of these programmes.

Importantly, no service operates efficiently without a dedicated project administrator and we were fortunate to have welcomed back Helen Shiells after a year's career break in New Zealand, back to enjoy the Belfast sun!

A recent important development in the New Horizons Belfast service has been the introduction of community outreach training. Outreach training has previously

been successfully delivered at venues in North and East Belfast in areas such as IT, Personal Development, Retail Skills and Employability. This year saw the commencement of further outreach training courses via the 'Moving Forward' programme, with courses to be delivered throughout the year for people all over Belfast, including topics such as Learning with Confidence, Digital Photography, and Healthy Living.

Our Community Pharmacy programme continued to go from strength to strength this year, with our pharmacist, Kevin McDevitt increasing his involvement in our service delivery. The theme of physical health based learning sessions (eg. 'medication management' / 'healthy hearts') and activities (eg. gym group / yoga) promoting mental health contributed to improved health outcomes for our clients. For example, increased confidence and motivation levels among clients attending our gym group, has led to some



people subsequently joining their local gyms, engaging in more helpful discussions with their pharmacist and stopping smoking. Following his contribution to the programme, Mr McDevitt has been nominated for the upcoming UK Community Pharmacist of the Year Awards. A Belfast client is also continuing to enjoy working in Mr McDevitt's pharmacy on a training placement, which is a further example of the positive outcomes being achieved via the Community Pharmacy Partnership.

A major focus of the service is working partnerships with other service providers and organisations. Examples are ArtsCare, Sustrans, Growing Connections (Green Team), Feel Great Therapies, Mindwise and Castlereagh Borough Council via the C-SAW project. This project

aims to improve the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of the local community and has contributed funding to the New Horizons Belfast gym group. An excellent example of partnership in action was the recent completion of a Mural Art project at the Everton Centre in Belfast. The project involved collaboration between clients from New Horizons and the Everton Centre and the innovative work of Belfast staff members. The project was recently successfully launched with support from the Belfast Trust and our referral partners.

There are exciting times ahead with the further development of outreach training, external partnerships, and the ongoing promotion of employability and personal achievement.

## DERMOT – WORKING IT OUT!

I use to live in New York, working in bars and restaurants. I moved back to Belfast in 2002, and I worked as a financial adviser until August 2005 when I became unwell with depression.

My Occupational Therapist brought me to AMH New Horizons when I was at a low point in my life. My doctor wanted me to go back into hospital as I had overdosed a couple of times. I found it hard to motivate myself everyday and my hopes were that AMH could help me get my life back on track.

When I started New Horizons I was placed in the kitchen. I built up friendships and my confidence came back little by little every day I attended New Horizons. I started my NVQ Level I and completed a work placement in one of Paul Rankin's Restaurants - Rain City in Belfast. I had a break for a few months as I was unwell, but when I came back, I got straight back into

my catering studies with NVQ Level 2 and Pastry Level 2. I worked in the Mourne Seafood restaurant on placement and the combination of this work experience and my studies improved my mental health so much.

The skills I acquired during my placement I have used to help myself and others within New Horizons. I took advantage of every course that New Horizons offered, as it helped me gain inner strength. All the staff helped me to get to the stage where I had the confidence to approach EGSA and set an Action Plan for my future career. Without pushing me in any direction, New Horizons has helped me focus on all my strengths. I can now use these strengths and skills I have built up to drive my action plan forward, return to further education and get my career back on track.

I now have great energy and drive. I'm currently studying for

an Access Diploma in Science at Belfast Metropolitan College. I hope to begin my Nursing studies at Queens University in September. I volunteer for Mindwise and I am learning more about mental health and continuing to maintain my own mental good-health. Once I obtain my nursing degree from Queens, I hope to become a Community Psychiatric Nurse.

I only have good things to say about AMH New Horizons. They have helped me recover from my mental illness and helped me focus on all my strengths. I now continue to work on my mental well-being, to make sure that I keep it at the level I got to in AMH.

## WELL-BEING PLEASURE



## BRIAN - WORKING IT OUT!

At only 17 years of age, I was admitted to a special acute admissions unit for under 18s at Knockbracken Healthcare Park. Following a lengthy period of treatment and assessment, I was diagnosed as having Bi-polar Disorder and after 6 months was discharged from hospital into the care of the "Early Intervention Team". Shortly afterwards I was referred, by this team, to AMH New Horizons in Belfast.

Even though I had been discharged from hospital, my mood remained unstable and my personal confidence and self-esteem were at a very low level. However, I was determined to move ahead with my own recovery and expressed a preference for supported learning at New Horizons as opposed to attending a local college.

I have been attending New Horizons for 3 years and throughout this time I've completed a comprehensive range of training tailored to meet my own learning needs and preferences. This training

has included NVQ levels 1 & 2 in Catering and Hospitality. I've also gained a Certificate in Food Hygiene which my fantastic key worker Colette McDowell has supported and encouraged me to achieve. I also complete CLAIT, a range of personal development courses and an accredited Employability course.

In order to support the NVQ programme, I had the opportunity to complete two very different training placements. One placement was in a busy restaurant owned by Paul Rankin and the other was in a Residential Home. The terms of these placements were negotiated with the help of the Employment Officers at New Horizons, Sonia Erwin and Michele Leitch, and support for me continued throughout their duration.

Over the past 3 years, I have had my medication reviewed on several occasions but have had no further hospital admissions. I have now been discharged by the Community Mental Health

Team but continue to attend appointments through Out-patients every 6 months. I feel that I can manage my own health much more positively and that my confidence and self-esteem have been boosted by my involvement with New Horizons. Throughout this period I have also moved out of my mum's house and into a home of my own.

I have been able to map my progress as well as plan for the future. Indeed I have recently enrolled and am now beginning a course of study at Belfast Metropolitan College. I am hoping to gain a Diploma Qualification in Community Facilitation, which I hope will lead onto, not only paid employment, but a career pathway.

I would strongly encourage and recommend that clients visit AMH New Horizons. There are many courses available, such as Photography, Cook It and many more. Staff members are warm and friendly and offer support and guidance.



## CRAIGAVON & BANBRIDGE

Thankfully upon reflection, we have much to be happy about in Craigavon & Banbridge. In October we held our Client Awards Ceremony and were delighted to see 60 clients achieve one or more accreditations in subjects like Advanced ECDL, NVQ Horticulture, NVQ Business Administration, ECDL, Basic Information Technology Personal Development, Essential English, Essential Maths, Cook It! Anxiety Management and Money Management. The Mayor Meta Crozier kindly presented the clients with their certificates.

Also in attendance were Marie Cullen and John McDonald from the Department for Employment and Learning, AMH Chairman Billy Kohner and Ian Sutherland Assistant Director of Mental Health Services Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

The staff team also had reason to celebrate as in March we retained Charter Mark status and successfully attained the transition to the new quality standard Customer Service Excellence, an achievement acknowledging the significant effort by the staff team in providing a quality service

in direct response to client need. And it is this partnership between staff and client that is essential in Working It Out and agreeing a suitable and supportive recovery pathway, the following sample of client testimonies demonstrate this best.

# PARTNERSHIP



## ANN – WORKING IT OUT!

There are many people in Northern Ireland who have had to avail of the services of an NHS hospital, and I am one of them. I was introduced to the new Here to Help “Meet and Greet” Scheme with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust based in Craigavon Area Hospital, by Nuala Ellison of AMH in Portadown.

I was really interested in the service. I felt that I would not only be able to help other people who may never have been to a hospital, or were nervous and stressed at the thought of attending an appointment, but it also would allow me to give something back to the hospital.

During my time volunteering, I have had great experiences with people being so appreciative of any help or assistance I have been in a position to offer. A kind helping hand and reassuring voice can be very comforting to patients and I am able to draw on my own personal experiences. It will not change the symptoms or situation but it may ease the burden a little!

The benefits are twofold, working in this project has enhanced my life, boosted my confidence and I am meeting people whom I haven't seen for years, and having a chat, a laugh and joke with some of the patients. It has really been a life saver for me and I am very grateful to all the other volunteers with whom there is a great rapport.

Yes, we all have our problems and burdens, but when you put on the uniform and step into the hospital to begin your shift, you can leave your problems far behind. Having an insight into other peoples' lives and circumstances can sometimes make you realise that what you were worrying about is often very trivial by comparison.

# SUPPORT WORTH SATISFACTION



## CAROLINE - WORKING IT OUT!

I suppose my 'Mental Health problems' began to manifest themselves in my early twenties. Problems really started to escalate after the death of my Dad in 1991; anxiety and severe panic attacks became part of everyday life. It became too much that I had to leave my job of eleven years - I just couldn't cope!

I was put on anti-depressants by my GP, and for a while these helped. I relied heavily on Mum and after my first child was born I suffered from quite bad physical problems and my Mum became my child's 'mum' for a few months as I slowly recovered. However my mental health deteriorated badly and I became a recluse - afraid to face the world. My GP was concerned and a period of medication, psychiatrists and doctors commenced. I wouldn't go anywhere unless accompanied - sadly the first year of my son's life passed me by, leaving just a blur of memories. I began improving, but disaster struck - my mum died. In a haze of medication and CPN counselling, I struggled to cope. I pushed myself on, as I was petrified, with an irrational fear, of losing the right to care for my son.

I was blessed at this time with the most patient care from my assigned CPN, Deidre Barker; as she encouraged me to go out with her and eventually began taking me over to AMH in Portadown.

This was the first positive step I took on the road of recovery. I was treated with respect and encouraged by the staff at all times. It was a place I began to feel comfortable going to and it 'opened my eyes' to just how many people suffer from mental health problems. Over the years I have met and made so many friends at AMH, both staff and clients.

During the last few years at AMH, I have completed my Advanced ECDL qualification. This was very challenging for me, but thankfully our tutor David made a very difficult course actually fun at times and gave me all the support that I needed.

I was encouraged to try the Essential Skills Course for Numeracy, and when I had finished this, it gave me the confidence I needed to enrol for GCSE Mathematics, part-time, at the Lurgan Campus of Further Education. This was difficult and I had to really give this my all - but the great news is that I passed! I now have a GCSE in Mathematics

to my credit. I would never have attempted this course if it wasn't for the time and patience I received from Lorraine, my tutor at AMH, and her belief in me.

I have just completed a NVQ 1 in Business Administration through AMH Portadown, and received all the support I needed from Tricia, my tutor. This course helped build my confidence, as I had to assist in reception duties and when problems arose, the staff was always willing to give advice.

My journey, with the help of the AMH team, has been a great achievement for me. My concentration has been so poor over the last few years, but the team at AMH have been there for me and encouraged me every step of the way. I really believe that I wouldn't have had the confidence to get to this point in my life without their dedicated input.

Nuala, the Employment Officer at AMH, persuaded me to try a voluntary placement in the ADAPT office in Lurgan. I have

been working there now since March 2010, one morning each week. This is giving me the experience of office work and is something positive to focus on. I enjoy the feeling of doing something worthwhile and even though I still need medication and some professional help on occasions, I now feel my life is in a much better place. I may never be able to beat my mental health problems but to manage them better is a blessing.

Rather than seeing myself as a 'mental case' that society may stigmatise me to be; I have learned to accept who I am, and to believe that I am a 'normal person' that can suffer from bouts of depression and anxiety.

My mental health may cause many struggles in my life. However, what matters most is being strong enough to get through the challenging times, and making my life the best that I possibly can. I cannot control my problems - however, what I can do - is to not let them control me!



## GRAINNE – WORKING IT OUT!

My name is Grainne, I have been attending AMH New Horizons Craigavon and Banbridge for the past 1 ½ years. A few years back I attended a night class at my local College, as I really wanted to improve my Maths skills. I found the class very overwhelming and the course was way above the level I could work at, so I stopped attending. In September 2009 I commenced Maths and English classes at AMH New Horizons.

I was very apprehensive at first and given my previous experience of attending a maths class was worried that the classes would be above my capabilities. I need not have worried as there was a very relaxed atmosphere in both classes and my Tutor Lorraine Sheppard made me feel very welcome. She carried out a simple Maths test with me to ascertain the level I would start working at. This was very reassuring and meant that I was working at a level I felt comfortable with and as a result I didn't feel overwhelmed with what lay ahead. With Lorraine's encouragement I realised that my Maths and English skills were better than I had expected and this gave me the confidence to continue on with the classes. I'm glad I did, as I have just completed City and Guilds Level 2 in English and Maths.

I have enjoyed the social side of the classes, there is a good rapport within the group and everyone understands each other

and no-one feels that they are being judged. I feel that English and Maths classes are very client led and everyone is able to work at their own level and speed.

Completing the English and Maths classes has helped me to focus and I was able to switch off from everyday stresses. Lorraine also gave us work to do at home and I felt this was very useful as it meant I was putting into practice the things she had covered in the class. I have gained a lot of confidence in my own abilities and am now much more able to support my children with their Maths and English skills. I hope to gain employment in the future and know that improving my Maths and English skills will enhance my employment opportunities.

## TIMOTHY - WORKING IT OUT

Work is essential to the recovery of people with mental health needs as it raises your self-esteem and provides social contact and structure to a day.

Through the AMH Employment Programme, I became a volunteer with DART (Down Armagh Rural Transport) as a minibus driver. I feel that I am a valued member of the team and get great job satisfaction by being able to help improve an individual's quality of life through my work.

My long-term aim is to return to paid employment and I feel that volunteering is a step in the right direction. I am kept busy and have the opportunity to meet new people as well as avail of training opportunities. Due to my voluntary placement my confidence and self-esteem have also improved.

# EMPLOYABILITY



## DOWNPATRICK

2009-2010 proved to be a successful time in Downpatrick in relation to employability. A number of clients have been engaging in volunteering work with various charities across the area including SVDP, NI Hospice, Mission Shop, Tools for Solidarity, National Trust, Ulster Wildlife Trust and YMCA.

A team of AMH clients worked with one local charity and helped to restore hand tools and equipment which filled a 20ft container destined for Tanzania.

Some clients have successfully secured full and part time employment in various sectors such as retail, care and domestic services.

Many clients have also achieved OCN Career Preparation accreditation. Representatives from the Department of Employment and Learning also assisted by carrying out mock interviews and helping clients identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Over the last year clients from Downpatrick were given the

opportunity to engage in new and innovative projects which helped develop their creative flair and physical capabilities. Firstly a number of clients took part in a film project in partnership with the Strangford Lough Management Committee and Studio On.

Clients used this time to develop ideas and put forward suggestions on how best to make a film, what angle to approach the film from and using various pieces of technology were able to produce a film of exceptional quality, this included sound, lighting and recording technology. The result was a short but insightful overview of the beauty and history of Strangford Lough.

The second group who have a musical flair, participated in

6 workshops that led to the production of a CD, supported by Down District Council. In these workshops, clients were encouraged to demonstrate their talents by playing a range of musical pieces. Many clients brought along their own instruments, others had the opportunity to try other strange and wonderful instruments from percussion to woodwind. For the composers in the group this was an opportunity to gain experience in putting words to music with the help of the professional tutors.

Ideas and suggestions were tried and tested before the masterpiece was recorded on the last day of the workshops. To end off the programme the musical talents were out on display in a showcase for friends and families in St. Michaels Centre.

Those clients who wanted to get more physically active were given the opportunity to take part in a range of outdoor pursuits.

The first group enjoyed many mornings walking through the Mourne Mountains, covering various terrain that tested the capabilities of even the most avid hill walker. Getting out and about in the Mournes was very rewarding for all concerned.

A group of clients who preferred to take to the water enjoyed several mornings in Castlewellan Lake where their team building skills were developed while paddling around in Canadian Canoes. These mornings proved successful in not only developing team skills but also giving the clients the opportunity to realise their own strengths and capabilities as well as building friendships with a range of people.

At the Christmas certificate presentation, Patron Nuala McKeever presented over 100 certificates to 50 clients. Brendan Murray received the Endeavour Award.



## DOWNPATRICK

AMH WELL, based in our Downpatrick service, stands for Well-being, Education, Lifestyles and Living and provides sessionally based services for people with mild to moderate mental health problems.

The WELL programme has in the last year witnessed a greater demand for personal development courses and the following accredited courses were delivered through community outreach:

Stress Management  
 Confidence Building  
 Personal Budgeting and Money Management  
 Demonstrating Speaking and Listening Skills  
 Making Choices in Pursuit of Personal Goals

Clients were also supported in socially inclusive programmes delivered by external organisations. These included leisure activities, such as yoga, tapestry and digital photography. The year also witnessed an increase in the number of people engaging in accredited courses in the local college. Programmes were delivered in Killyleagh, Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and Newcastle.

The Positive Steps Programme was delivered to people from the neighbourhood renewal area in partnership with the South Eastern Trust funded by the Department of Social Development.

Positive Steps was designed to promote good mental health and to improve emotional well-being. The programme was structured around the following 'positive steps', and was delivered in a variety of outreach settings over 10 sessions:

1. Get Creative
2. Accept who you are
3. Get talking
4. Get involved
5. Health and well-being
6. Try something new
7. Asking for help
8. Keeping active
9. Keeping in touch
10. Relax, relax, relax



## FERMANAGH

A continuous and dedicated focus on excellence in service delivery led to the achievement of the Government's new quality award, Customer Service Excellence. Staff and clients within AMH New Horizons Fermanagh, were delighted to meet the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard with 100% compliance, and also to achieve a compliance plus award for the extended portfolio of training on offer to clients.

Only seven organisations in Northern Ireland currently hold this prestigious award. The enormity of this achievement, by the small team in Fermanagh, is apparent when you take into account the size of the organisations, such as Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Northern Ireland Court Service, who share this honour.

On presenting the award, Elaine Way, Chief Executive WHSSB, congratulated the staff team, "This award shows that AMH New Horizons are delivering not just a good service, but an excellent service, and I am determined to ensure that all services in the Western Board Area meet such high standards of excellence."

As a result of funding received from the Health Promotion Agency the service arranged several events to mark World Mental Health Day 2009.

An open day, and presentation for families and friends provided a valuable opportunity for carers to meet staff and to have an overview of the service .

The service also hosted a Mental Health Fair, which was open to

the general public and which showcased the work of 14 partner organisations, all providing support and advice to people at various stages in their recovery. During 2009, we worked on an exciting history project with Brookeborough Development Association, a local community organisation who are now the custodians of Brookeborough Railway Station.

Clients in our occupational skills department, guided by Norman and Nigel were asked to produce a replica of an early 20th Century horse /cattle railway carriage. The original 1915 carriage was delivered on-site, where a dedicated team copied each detail and built a replica carriage using authentic materials and craftsmanship. The new carriage will be sited at Brookeborough Railway station.

## DAVID – WORKING IT OUT!

My name is David I am 47 years old. I had a great career, excelling in the work I did. I suffered a serious mental illness which led to an inpatient admission to hospital on several occasions. My last admission was to a secure unit, this led to me losing my job. I realised I had reached rock bottom - I lost self worth, confidence and my ability to do simply things. Despite the great support of my family, I isolated myself, I let despair take over. I was slipping back to the dark place.

My CPN was very supportive and encouraging, she gave me the reassurance I needed, and organised a place for me at Fermanagh New Horizons and with the encouragement of my family I accepted the place. It was a big step to go into the centre on the first day, I remember nearly not going. I had great apprehension but it was soon dispelled by the welcome I got from clients and staff.

After an induction I was able to choose the department I would

like to try. I always had a passion for cooking which was a million miles away from my previous career. I chose the catering department and thought I would give it a go.

Since joining the catering department I have regained confidence by working as part of team producing good food. I once again feel I am making a contribution and my self-worth has improved. I am not now the same person who entered Fermanagh New Horizons - that seems a long time ago.

Whilst at Fermanagh New Horizons I have been able to achieve many qualifications, and not just in catering- I have an RYA 3 in sailing, and OCNs in Woodwork and Horticulture. I am completing my NVQ 3 in Professional Catering, and I have just achieved my NVQ3 in Patisserie and Confectionery. I have been able to follow my passion for cooking, and I have had the confidence to join other chefs at various cookery schools, including a recent Prue Leith

Diploma Course in London. I have just completed an advanced diploma course at Bellise Cookery School, where international students came together, and I was delighted to be ranked second, at that.

My recovery has been made possible by the very dedicated staff, who go out of their way on a daily basis to make sure I have a good day. The clients around me also help and I have made very good friends both with staff and my fellow clients. I am indebted to my catering instructor who has given me great support and encouragement in the catering department.

Fermanagh New Horizons is a very relaxed place to be, there is no pressure, and mental illness is accepted and met head on. The centre helps people find themselves again; mental illness is understood and not shied away from. Staff and clients at the centre have given me back my dignity and self confidence.

## FOYLE

To aid recovery and support employability, this year we extended the variety of training and personal development programmes on offer at Foyle. The latest accredited courses include DIY- Home maintenance skills, Crafts, Men's Health and an Outward Bound course specifically for our male clients. So far, the feedback from the DIY course has been very positive, with lots of tips, techniques and accredited outcomes already achieved.

The craft area has been a huge success with several courses full to capacity and a waiting list for level 2 already developing.

Men's health has resulted in some clients reporting positive changes in lifestyle choices, and all can report a significant increase in their knowledge and understanding of important health issues.

Focusing on activities that would challenge them both mentally and physically, the Out Board course was developed by 8 clients who engaged in a pilot scheme during the latter part of last year. The result was a 20 week accredited course consisting of hill and

coastal walking, orienteering, camping, canoeing, sea kayaking and general outdoor skills.

There were also many hidden benefits which were discovered during the pilot programme such as, challenging a fear of heights, challenging agoraphobia and challenging a fear of water. Each of these challenges were met and conquered. There were also many additional physical benefits such as getting fitter, quitting smoking and losing some excess weight.

It is hoped that long after this programme finishes these clients will be encouraged and have the confidence to join clubs in

the community and continue to participate in some of these outdoor activities.

The outdoor programme is just one example of how Foyle is promoting a holistic approach to wellbeing. We recognise that all areas of life need to be in harmony to achieve success, including employability skills, supportive relationships and social or community involvement.

We are often asked;

- can I engage in the Employment Programmes?
- is it possible if you are recovering from mental ill health to try work placements?
- or gain part-time or full time employment?

The answer is yes!

We can recall many, many examples of past or present clients who have had similar concerns, asked similar questions

and have gone on to have great success. There are many similarities between each of their success stories. They have all been central to any decisions made during their time at AMH. All of them have talked through their concerns with AMH staff, friends, family or professionals, and each of them have set realistic, achievable goals.

One major concern is "Do I need to be well?"

Like everyone, our clients need to be able to cope with the demands of a working or volunteering environment. AMH aids this transition by having robust support mechanisms in place for the client and indeed the employer to avail of.

We look forward to another year, when many more of our clients set and reach their goals and improve their employability and well-being.



## OWEN – WORKING IT OUT!

Owen – a client at AMH New Horizons Foyle is currently involved in several accredited training programmes which he hopes will enable him to meet the first of his many goals. Along with the training programmes he has discovered the essential need to support his mental health by getting physically fitter. The pilot cycling programme at New Horizons fits his aims perfectly.

Owen explains – “Riding a bike has given me great joy and fulfilment in ways I thought were not possible. When I was a kid growing up, whenever I saw kids on bikes I knew then I was desperate to give it a go, and the very first time I got on a bike I was full of joy, although a bit nervous! From that moment on, I was glad I’d made the leap and I get a buzz every time I put foot to pedal.

When I heard that Foyle New Horizons were organising to go out on bikes I came alive once again. Having had a feel for it there’s nothing more exciting than being out and about in the fresh air, doing a bit of exercise and keeping fit. It doesn’t matter if

you’re young or old, the fact is it’s good for your heart and you feel a sense of adventure – it’s really enjoyable.

My advice to you is give it a try. I’m sure you’ll agree it’s an adventure waiting to happen and to be enjoyed to the full. Before you go on a bike you are given lots of advice and your progress is monitored to ensure you are doing everything correctly and to increase your confidence. It’s also important to ensure you remain safe, that you wear a helmet and, when on a busy road and that you use the correct hand signals. It’s an adventure which I hope you will enjoy as much as I have!”



POSITIVE  
THINKING

## NEWRY & MOURNE

During 2009/2010 our Canal Street Service was officially opened by Mrs Fionnuala Cook, patron of AMH and former chairperson of the Southern Trust. A large crowd of people attended the opening ceremony and had a chance to view the excellent facilities and training equipment. The new building and modern facilities will help us to be ready for the changing needs of our clients and the qualifications they need to progress on to employment options, further education or cope successfully in the community. This is the first phase of the new plans we have for the Newry Service.

During the year, our clients have continued to achieve a great many qualifications in both vocational and personal development courses. 100 clients received 250 accredited awards, a wonderful achievement.

The new Employers' Forum was set up to support clients in employment options and to raise the profile of the organisation. The members of the forum are Peter Fitzsimmons, (Chairman NICO), Neil Collins (General Manager Glen Electric), Karl Hughes (Project Advisor Newry & Mourne Mental Forum), Stephen Mc Clelland (Manager Newry & Mourne Social Enterprise Agency), Malcolm Reid (Operations Manager SAICA), and Robert Mowbray (AMH Board Member).

With the successful establishment of the Employers' Forum in Newry we have seen the employment opportunities increase for our clients. Each Forum Member has agreed to place a client in their business and provide valuable

work experience. This has led to full and part time employment places for some of our clients. Roslyn Young, Employment Officer, is full of praise for the Employers' Forum for the placement opportunities they provide and also for their support, advice and encouragement.

The new opportunities created by the Employers' Forum have been a factor in the employment service meeting all its employment targets. The Employers Forum have also been active in supporting special events in the unit, these include the Opening of the new premises in Canal Street, the Christmas Fayre, and the Certificate Presentation Day.

Peter Fitzsimmons Forum Member and Chairman of NICO said that he is delighted to be involved in the Forum and will work hard for AMH New Horizons in lobbying and advocating on our behalf with the aim of creating new opportunities to improve the service and break down misunderstandings surrounding poor mental health.



During the year, Newry and Mourne have been very active in the area of Health & Wellbeing.

Numerous accredited courses have been offered to the clients including Planning & Cooking for a Healthy Lifestyle OCN Level 2, Induction to Drug Awareness for the Individual OCN Level 1, Health & Hygiene in the Home OCN Level 1, Health & Safety Awareness OCN Level 1 and Healthy Living OCN Level 1. All these courses proved to be a great success and more courses are planned for the new financial year.

As well as the accredited courses the unit continues to offer a range of recreation and fitness programmes. The walking group in Newry has the advantage of the stunning scenery of the Mourne Mountains and Carlingford Lough close by to explore. Anne Lutton, our Catering Instructor, is also a qualified Walking Leader and prepares the clients well with sound advice on such things as the correct clothing and sustenance required when rambling.

Some of our clients who are unable to go on long walks

or participate in some of the fitness programmes can still be active by taking part in armchair exercises which is also very popular in the unit.

Our five-a-side football team practice every week and this was evident when they won a five-a-side football competition against teams from AMH Belfast and Craigavon New Horizons. The tournament was held in Newry City FC.

## PETER – WORKING IT OUT!

I am a 55 year old gentleman from the Newry and Mourne area. I live with my wife and two sons aged 21 years and 16 years. I have Bi-Polar Affective Disorder. For 26 years I worked, first for Custom and Excise and then as a successful business man, owning and running three music outlets across Northern Ireland. In 2003 I had to make the difficult decision to gradually close my businesses due to market changes in the music industry. With much regret my final business closed in 2006.

In 2003 when I was well aware of the changes occurring in my business market, I decided to re-visit education and over a period of four years I obtained a diploma in Humanities, a BA Degree and a Masters Degree in Irish History.

I gained a great sense of achievement and fulfilment from my academic success but when it came time to apply for jobs in this area, my lack of experience let me down and each unsuccessful interview led to a decline in my mental health. I had placed such a high value on my role as a worker in the community, and this series of knock backs, despite my high academic achievements, led to a severe episode of depression, resulting in a hospital admission in

January 2007 for a period of eight weeks.

Following discharge, I was referred to services in the Mental Health Department of the Southern Regional Trust Daisy Hill Hospital Newry. There, I was under the care of an Occupational Therapist who after a period of consultation and assessment referred me to AMH New Horizons Canal Street. Despite possessing a long list of qualifications, I expressed an interest in a computer course and some help with interview skills and techniques.

I started AMH New Horizons in May 2007. I completed my CLAIT and ECDL qualifications and was referred during that period to the Employment Officer.

I took part in an OCN Employment Preparation level one and two and gained valuable experience during a Role play interview, where an actual Employer gave me feedback on my performance.

During my time in New Horizons I have continued to work with the Employment Officer, searching for appropriate jobs and completing application forms. Occasionally the Employment Officer and I will create an interview role-play situation where we will discuss possible interview questions. I did have a few unsuccessful interviews but I coped better by receiving constructive criticism in a supportive way from the Employment Officer. This supportive role has been a great help, so much so that in July 2009 I secured a full-time job as a Cultural Assistant in Down County Council.

I now have that sense of being a valued worker in the community again!



## THE VISION PROJECT – A UNIQUE SERVICE

AMH New Horizons Newry & Mourne's Vision Project continues to make great progress providing a unique service to people living with Aspergers Syndrome.

Clients participating in the service have benefited from the one to one interaction with Eilis Kayes the Vision Project Coordinator.

All the clients in the department have participated in accredited training and have excelled in the IT qualifications ECDL and CLAIT. Roslyn Young, Newry & Mourne's Employment Officer, works closely with Eilis to provide employment options and other opportunities for all the clients in the Vision Project.

At present the 5 clients are participating in work

placements, in Argos, Eason's, The Post Office, The Heart Foundation Charity Shop and Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency. One of the clients has successfully left the service to pursue a NVQ Level 2 qualification in Beauty Therapy at the local college. Her aim is to become a Beauty Consultant.

Health Professionals from the Southern Trust have complimented the service on numerous occasions due to the success of the programme. The Vision Project is a unique service that specialises in a "person centred" approach for

people suffering from Aspergers Syndrome. The Southern Health & Social Trust has recommended a study of the service with a view to replicating it in other Health & Social Services Trusts.

The Vision project worker, together with the service user, family and relevant professionals devises a plan to create opportunities towards independence and social inclusion. The "person centred" approach places the person at the centre of decision-making and enables them to choose their desired services and support.

We continue to look forward to the opportunities and challenges the next 12 months will bring.

## VICKY – WORKING IT OUT!

My name is Vicky, I am twenty six years old and live at home with my parents and two brothers. I was diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome at the age of twelve and although I attended main stream school until the age of sixteen, I had on going difficulties with my academic work. I was very aware that I was different, in many aspects, to my peer group, particularly in social communication and interaction.

I became very withdrawn, refused periodically to take medication and believed that I was unable to cope with life in the same way as other young people of my age. My family found it difficult to cope as my anxiety levels increased and my behaviour became more irrational and unpredictable. I developed quite obsessional behaviours. I experienced difficulties in communicating, both in understanding others and also being understood, which I later discovered is consistent with Aspergers Syndrome.

I was referred by a Consultant Psychiatrist to AMH in October 2006 but due to my previous experience of making and maintaining meaningful relationships with others, I was quite undecided about any service AMH could offer. Following a number of visits however with

the Vision Project officer, I agreed to attend the Greenbank unit. By building up a relationship of trust and understanding, I interacted openly with others, and my confidence grew and I achieved various accredited training awards. I progressed to a supported work placement and recognised once again my ability to achieve success. I was supported by the Vision Project and was awarded a place in the Southern Regional College.

AMH successfully negotiated on my behalf for assistance from a learning support tutor. My attendance at New Horizons helped me to believe in myself again and I have completed my first year in NVQ Level 2 in Beauty Therapy. I left the unit in October 2009 and am confident that I will continue to move forward in my chosen career by becoming a qualified beautician.

## NORTH DOWN & ARDS

Another year at AMH New Horizons North Down and Ards, with many activities and events taking place in addition to our extensive training and education programmes. From singing at Bangor Choral Festival to Cycling the Comber Greenway our clients have broadened their horizons, learnt new skills and had fulfilling experiences. One of the highlights was when thirteen of our clients were presented with a Level 2 National Standard Cycling Training Award Scheme from the Mayor of Belfast Cllr Naomi Long.

We have now secured further funding for three years through the Community Development and Health Network's, Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership. This has enabled us to continue to deliver our Recovery Programme - Journey to Wellness - in both our Bangor and Ards units. Clients are encouraged to take ownership of their own wellness and identify existing and new resources, recover lost skills and abilities and develop new ones. Our Boots Pharmacists, Kenny Graham and Colette Moorhead, have offered drop in one to one advice sessions, Smoking Cessation Information along with other health related checks and activities. Their contribution to this project was recognised and they were nominated for a NI Healthcare Award at this years finals held in the Europa Hotel.

New Horizons aims to equip our clients with knowledge and lifeskills in relation to managing their physical, emotional and social life as these all impact on their mental

health. In response to clients requests we have arranged several workshops including Safetalk (suicide alertness), Understanding Self harm, Patient Client Council, a session with CAUSE the carers' organisation, First Aid, Yoga and Smoking Cessation.

Over 500 people from all over the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area, attended 'Your Rough Guide to Positive Mental Health' at the Marine Court Hotel, Bangor on October 7th to mark World Mental Health Day 2009. This included staff and clients from AMH New Horizons North Down & Ards who actively took part throughout the day.

The event was opened by David Tumilty, Mental Health Promotion Specialist with the Trust, who welcomed visitors from Lisburn, Downpatrick and the North Down & Ards area in addition to representation from over seventy organisations who work to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. He continued



EMPOWERMENT



that the 'Balmoral Show' type programme had been inspired by an earlier event in May entitled 'Listening to You' during which 100 service users and providers shared their ideas and suggestions on what the format should be for the main World Mental Health Day event.

One of our former clients Trevor Wray also spoke at the opening ceremony and remarked, 'As a former service user myself I am encouraged by the level of support which is out there for those who need it. When I look around the room there are several of the organisations which I have personal experience of using and can vouch for the excellent support which they have provided. So much so that it has helped me return to full-time employment within the catering sector'.

As one of the largest events in Northern Ireland marking World Mental Health Day, Trevor paid tribute to the members of the local organising committee. Dr Nick Baylis provided an extremely

inspiring workshop on wellbeing skills. In the afternoon Andrew Willoughby focused on 'Happiness' and how to connect with the new science of wellbeing. Throughout the day there were sessions on recovery, handling stress, positive thinking and relaxation as well as an opportunity to visit over 70 information stands with advice and guidance on how to improve and maintain ones physical and mental health.

The event was seen as a huge success and the WMHD Committee of which two Ards clients are members have continued to organise similar events which benefit everyone who wishes to learn more about improving their mental health.

Later in the year staff and clients attended the launch of the 'Live and Learn' Big Lottery funded project at Bangor's Carnegie Library. The 'Live and Learn' project is a partnership between Action Mental Health, Mindwise, CAUSE and the NI Library Service. The BBC radio Talk Back

programme was broadcast with Wendy Austin from the Library during the event. Wendy took the opportunity to visit the displays and spoke with clients who presented her with a tiffany glass panel of Scrabo Tower.

One of the clients who had engaged in our service presented us with a plaque which we now display at reception. It states 'If you want to discover New Horizons, you must have the courage to lose sight of the shore' and we feel that this encapsulates our unit's ethos. It gives the staff a great sense of pride to see our clients build in confidence, gain new skills and qualifications and progress on from our service.

Over the past year we have had clients commence full time college courses, voluntary work, training placements and secure full and part time employment. It gives us hope that together we can improve their prospects of gaining employment or engaging in other forms of meaningful activity in the community.

## TERRI - WORKING IT OUT!

My name is Terri and I am 28 years old. I became mentally ill in December 2007 and was admitted into Windsor House in Belfast City Hospital. I was mentally and physically exhausted. The Nurses and Doctors looked after me very well. They put me on medication for the foreseeable future and I was discharged from Hospital after 6 weeks.

I had been living and working in Belfast for 5 years but had to move home to live with my parents in Portaferry. It was a big adjustment and I spent 4 months recovering at home with the support of my family and friends.

My CPN Mary visited me every week and she recommended AMH New Horizons to me and I said yes straight away. I joined AMH New Horizons in April 2008. I was very nervous at the beginning but I found the people very friendly and welcoming and soon settled in. The best thing I have found that AMH has given me a structure to my day from 9.30am to 3.30pm, we are fed and looked after very well by all the staff.

I have met so many genuine people who have different problems and have helped each other back to full health.

One of my first courses was Journey to Wellness with Mandy Hanna, it was very enjoyable. I often fell asleep at times as the medication I am on can make me feel drowsy, but I continued on doing a variety of courses from Card Making to Flower Arranging.

AMH has transformed my life, I have gained confidence and been helped to obtain 2 voluntary work placements. New Horizons gives people a platform to get better and to enrich their lives. I am very grateful for having the opportunity to attend AMH New Horizons.



## 06. AMH ACCEPT & AMH THE JUNCTION

Located in Lisburn, AMH Accept offers training on a part-time basis including work preparation, guidance, support and access to training leading to qualifications for people with mental health needs. Based in the same unit, AMH The Junction is a service for young people with mental illness between the ages of 18 - 30 exclusively and focuses on their social and vocational needs. The programme comprises of both drop in and organised activities.

In January 2009 the South Eastern HSC Trust invited staff and clients at AMH Accept to join the Lisburn CUP network. The Lisburn CUP network is made up of Carers, Users and Providers of mental health Services in the Lisburn area. Over the past 12 months Nadya Maclynn and clients have been attending meetings and involved in the planning of how the CUP group will work. We have attended the SE Trust Strategic CUP group planning days and participated in the development of the Terms of Reference and Strategy for this group going forward. It has been a great source of information about Trust mental health services and the changes in the Trust.

We have also learnt about what services there are in the local area and it has been a great way to network and show case our service, as well as ensuring that the views, opinions and priorities of carers and service users are taken into consideration also.

In Accept we have had great support from the clients, they have taken turns to ensure every meeting has been attended by a representative and also as they have started to grow in confidence, been more vocal in meetings, discussing their views, opinions and experiences and speaking on behalf of other services users also. Clients have shown an interest in developing their skills to be more involved in the meetings, and we are currently sourcing training to support service users and carers

to develop the skills to chair and minute meetings. Service users have also expressed their interest in being more involved in consultations for the development of mental health services, and taking a more active role as service representatives in Accept. It has been an empowering experience for us all.

The Junction service is now well established working out of the Derriaghy office, we have observed an increase in clients accessing activities in community venues. The guitar group have started to use a room in the local community centre to host their lessons, rather than using the Junction office.

There has been a great increase in Junction service users accessing accredited courses through

Accept and we have seen a rise in the number of clients returning to main stream education in September 2009.

During the year the Accept and Junction Service was independently evaluated by the Beeches Management Centre. The clients were keen to fill in evaluation forms and attend individual appointments with the evaluators and put great effort into sharing their experiences of Accept. Mental health professionals from the SE Trust were also consulted as part of the evaluation and we were delighted to receive a thoroughly positive report.

In the past we have had a great interest in The Dog Grooming course and this has been a popular course for animal lovers and for clients interested in working with animals. This year we were delighted to place 4 clients into training placements in Barkingham Palace Dog Groomers. They gained experience in dog care, hygiene and grooming as well as dealing with the general public.



One of the clients has since launched her own business as a dog walker and dog sitter.

We have continued to source courses from WEA and were pleased to access The TOTAL FOOTBALL course from the Man Matters project. This discussion based course encouraged men to become involved in discussing subjects such as; the history of football, hooliganism, marketing and money matters. This course was enjoyed by men attending Accept and is the first successful dedicated men's course we have been able to deliver.

It is planned that we will further develop courses through the Man Matters project in the future and these courses will help men feel comfortable in an adult learning and social environment and encourage them to increase their skills and confidence and return to work.

## ROSINA – WORKING IT OUT!

In late December I entered the AMH Accept building for the first time. I was very anxious and very apprehensive, not knowing what was in front of me. I soon realised that I had nothing to fear, as everyone made me feel very welcome, and in no time at all I felt at ease with my surroundings.

I started my first course which was Confidence Building. From there I went on to do many other courses. It was not only the courses I enjoyed but the company of others. I realised that I was not alone, everyone else was in the same situation as me.

At that time I had no confidence and did not trust others. As time went by and I began to meet different people from different walks of life my confidence started to return.

What I found nice about going to Accept was that no one forced me to do anything I felt was out of my depth, but at the same time, the AMH staff encouraged me to try different courses. No one judged me if I found the task to hard. Nothing was ever too much trouble, as all the staff and tutors have very good listening skills.

At this time in my life I was in a very dark place and needed support and encouragement which I received from the staff and tutors at Accept. I know that if it had not been for the staff and tutors, I would not be here today.

These days are very different from my early days at Accept, not only have I regained my confidence but now I am involved in Voluntary Work with Victim Support which was set up by Andrea the Employment Officer. I thoroughly enjoy my work and this has also helped to increase my confidence.

So for this I have to thank everyone at AMH Accept. I have nothing but praise and admiration for the staff who work so hard to help people like me come back to life.



## 07. AMH PROMOTE

AMH Promote in Bangor is a training centre which delivers training to adults with learning difficulties, with a view to progression to employment options, social inclusive groups and/or further education.

AMH Promote offers a host of training specifically designed to meet group and individual needs through ASDAN accreditation. The subjects range from Drama/Performing Arts to Self Sufficiency, with many having an independence theme, thus reducing dependency. Each year clients meet with staff to agree or not agree on the choice of subjects to be offered, whilst also ensuring need and structure is maintained. So for many subjects it's out with the old and in with the new, which maintains creativity, motivation and increases new learning skills.

This year we have sampled several new subjects including ASDAN Multi Sensory, where we designed a spare room we had into a multi sensory haven to support the subject matter. This was made possible through a small grant from ASDAN and the support of a local fabric store. Clients now can experience relaxation and natural therapeutic activities whilst also reducing stress, and so far this has proven to be a very popular and a welcomed addition to the service. Mind you it's difficult keeping the staff out!

Mosaic also continues to prove a hit with the clients and staff, and recently they completed a car that resides at the front of the building, by turning it into a piece of art.

The car went from grim to glam in the space of a year and enhanced creativity, social skills, dexterity, and exercise to name a few, and whilst this was a huge undertaking everyone, and I mean everyone got involved in this fun project.

Over in our employment department, 2009-2010 has seen a shift in our employment route when progressing AMH Promote's clients to employment options. In 2009 we reached a peak of 24 clients in employment options, i.e., volunteering, in training placements, undertaking supported permitted work and further education. However due to a culmination of factors ranging from employers not offering paid employment due to the current

financial climate and clients prioritising their social lives over working, we devised new criteria for clients to be referred to our employment programme within AMH Promote.

Prior to any placement, our clients are taught a range of skills through an ASDAN accreditation course, with a view to developing not only work place skills (as before) but also personal developmental skills which in turn meets employers quality demands, in this current dynamic business world.

Our coffee mornings continue to open for business on the last Thursday of each month from 10am - 12.30pm, and is an important part of training for our catering clients, so please show your support and come visit us, and try our wares.

We maintained our Charter Mark status via the yearly health check and progressed on towards the CSE (Customer Service Excellence) Award.

Whilst we all work hard in AMH Promote we never forget to have fun, which is such an important part of team building, increasing social skills and strengthening productive learning. We pride ourselves as a friendly, structured, client empowered service, where a warm welcome awaits all.

TRAINING  
ACHIEVEMENT

## LOUISE – WORKING IT OUT!

My name is Louise McBride and here is a little snapshot of my life so far. Until I was 25 I lived with my Mum, then I moved out from my Mum's to a supported living house and I lived there for a year. I call this the, "Great Escape!" I then moved to a flat across the road and I have been living in this home for the last three years. I was very happy to move in to supported living where I cook, clean and look after myself. My Mum even has to make an appointment to see me as I am always busy! I have now learnt so many Life Skills that I am happily living alone, although the staff pop in and out to make sure I'm still alive!

Promote found me my first dream job volunteering at Assisi Animal Sanctuary. I volunteered for three years and it wasn't all about cuddly animals! I had to start at 8.30am to clean out the cattery runs. I cleaned their dishes and prepared their food. I also cleaned the rabbit and dog runs, which was hard, dirty work. I found this rewarding, helping neglected animals and seeing them get their dream home.

I had a training placement in AMH Promote on their reception for a year, three days a week. This placement gave me more skills than I thought possible and now I feel very confident in everyday situations and dealing with people.

I have completed two ASDAN qualifications, one in Animal Care and one in World of Work through Catey's support. I didn't have to go to training for them and I did most of the work in my own time. All in all Promote has helped me come out of my shell and become the woman I wanted to be!

WORK  
OPPORTUNITIES



## 08. AMH VOTE

Located in Portadown, AMH VOTE offers a varied training and personal development programme to young people, aged 16-25 in the Craigavon and Banbridge area who have a learning disability.

Gladly, it has been another positive and progressive year at AMH VOTE regarding trainee and project development. Many trainees have benefited from work experience in areas such as retail and the food industry with paid employment and voluntary placements being secured for some. New opportunities were created through effective working relationships with B&M Bargains, Superdrug, B&Q, DEL and WADE Training.

In direct response to identified and expressed trainee need(s) the project focused on and offered accredited training in new areas like Independent Travel and Health and Hygiene, together with established courses in Personal Development, Get Active, IT, Numeracy, Literacy, Community Safety, Job Skills, Money Management and Citizenship.



Effective partnerships are key to the quality and meaningfulness of training enjoyed by attendees, and of particular note are those forged with the Sports Division of the Craigavon Borough Council and the Southern Regional College (Banbridge

Campus). Collectively it is these partnerships that enable Vote to support clients in their transition into adulthood, while they are "Working it out!".

AMH VOTE is part funded by The RANK Foundation, The Baily Thomas Trust Foundation, Ulster Garden Villages and the Southern HSC Trust.

## NICOLA – WORKING IT OUT!

AMH VOTE this year has had a big impact on Nichola's maturity. In the last four months she has excelled in many ways and has acquired a more adult approach to everything; her dress, cleanliness, temperament and social aspects. It comes as a great relief to me that Nicola is getting another year with VOTE to help seal her maturity. A big thank you to all the staff who have made this happen. Thank you.

**Daphne, Parent**

I love coming to AMH VOTE. I want to thank the VOTE staff for giving me another year plus they have taught me to learn new things and gave me confidence in myself.

I also have learnt to be a more mature adult. I like the activities we do and I am never bored. The activities I do will help me in the future. I have also made really good friends.

**Nicola, VOTE Trainee**

## BERENICE – WORKING IT OUT!

VOTE has helped Berenice grow in confidence and to make new friends. It has provided her with the social skills and learning tools to progress further in life.

**Jane, Parent**

My name is Berenice Quinn and for the last two years I have been attending AMH VOTE, I still remember my first day. I was so scared, nervous and anxious about meeting everyone. Now I am the opposite.

When someone new joins VOTE I love getting to know them.

Now I make friends easily. I am confident in what I do and I am an outgoing person. All of these qualities I never had before starting VOTE, because of my autism.

**Berenice, VOTE Trainee**

## 09. MENSSANA

AMH MensSana supports young people and their key contacts in the area of mental health and emotional wellbeing through a range of activities tailored to suit group needs. AMH MensSana operates across the southern area.

“Mental health is key in your life and you have to look after it. It is important not to judge others that may have difficulties, we all can have troubles from time to time” - The views of a pupil following their attendance at MensSana’s Provoking Thought workshop, designed to discuss mental health promotion, nurture self-help, identify sources of support and encourage early intervention in young people.

Popular in delivery and popular by demand, there were 70 sessions of Provoking Thought throughout the review period reaching 1416 young people across the Southern area. With its innovative and interactive approach, sessions can see equal measures of drama, music, film and facts on mental health issues depending on the profile of its audience.

Consistent with regional strategies and local action plans to promote mental health awareness and suicide/ self-harm prevention, AMH MensSana works positively with all others to achieve suitable programmes with the long-term aspiration of building healthier, future communities.

Service staff continue to be busy working also with the key contacts of young people (youth workers/

parents etc). Mental health training for parents and carers was delivered in Armagh, Donaghmore, Craigavon, Crossmaglen and Dromore, with 174 attending.

Our own Changing Minds programme was delivered to 46 teaching staff from Drumglass High School Dungannon and St Michael’s Grammar Lurgan. In Kilkeel we delivered Understanding Self-harm training, the first of its kind in the Southern Area, with other localities benefiting from training in Mental Health First Aid and ASIST.

In partnership with the Southern Trust’s Health and Well-Being Team and SELB Pupil Personal Development Services we were involved in the another successful Open Your Mind event with nine schools taking part and over 130 young people participating.



New partnerships were developed with local community groups PLACE (The Portadown Local Action and Community Enterprise Group), REACT (Reconciliation, Education and Community Training) Armagh & The Links Project Lurgan, enabling staff to reach new audiences, making mental health matter to a greater number of young people and their key contacts. This is an area of our work that we are keen to see develop and if you feel that AMH MensSana could assist you, please do get in touch.

To find out more about AMH MensSana why not visit our updated website at [www.menssanaproject.org.uk](http://www.menssanaproject.org.uk) Staff continue to contribute to mental health promotion and suicide and self-harm prevention at Regional, Trust and Community level through established Protect Life and Mental Health forums.

AMH MensSana is part funded by Children in Need, Fair Share (Big Lottery) and the Southern HSC Trust under the Protect Life strategy.

“A very worthwhile workshop, material used and topics covered, very relevant to this age group. An excellent presentation, very skilled facilitator engaging with young people and keeping them interested in the subject area”

Teacher

# 10. DEL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

AMH aims to source and support employment opportunities, training placements and further training for people engaging in the AMH Employment Programme. There are many options available to employers and clients, including the following:

## Work Preparation Programme (WPP)

AMH is a sub-contractor (along with (RNIB - Royal National Institute of Blind People, RNID - Royal National Institute for Deaf People, and Triangle Housing) to USEL - Ulster Supported Employment Ltd, to deliver the Work Preparation Programme in the Belfast and South East regions of the province.

WPP is a 12 week programme incorporating training and 10 to 12 weeks work placement in an area of work the individual is interested in. Each participant receives one to one support with the Employment Officer who provides training on preparing for work, compiling a CV, job applications through to interview preparation etc. Some of the participants have also completed AMH's accredited Employability Course and found it useful in preparing for going back into the workplace.

One South East WPP client in their evaluation, said the most helpful part of the programme was "building confidence to assist with moving towards paid employment".

A Belfast WPP client found the Employment Officer "understanding and helped me overcome difficulties I had in the past about finding employment".

## New Deal for Disabled People Programme (NDDP)

AMH in partnership with Mencap continue to offer the province wide NDDP Programme to individuals, on disability related benefits, search and find employment of either part time, including Permitted Work Higher Limit or full time work of 16 hours plus and sustain it. 70% of individuals registered with AMH have gone into and remained in employment with 71% of those going into full time employment through AMH during 2009-10.

AMH also offers through NDDP, financial assistance towards short term work based training that will assist individuals get back into employment. Examples of training include AMH's accredited Employability Programme, HGV and Forklift Training, Coach Drivers' Licence, Welding etc. Through the Work Focussed Action Plan, agreed between the individual and the Employment Officer, the Employment Officer meets every 10 working days with the individual to support and assist them in preparing and applying for work and once in employment they will receive ongoing support for the following 6 months.

One NDDP client said, "I got back into work and had support in doing so".

## Workable (NI) Programme

AMH in partnership with Mencap moved into its second year of delivering the Workable (NI) Programme supporting individuals in full time employment. In January 2009 a new full time Employment Support Officer was appointed to cover the Belfast area which brought the team back up to its full compliment of staffing and saw the client numbers onto the programme increase from 27 at the start of the year to 36 in March 2010 along with 5 progressing into unsupported employment.

One of the most successful element of Workable (NI) has been the specialist one to one support the Employment Support Officers are able to give to individuals recovering from mental health problems. They identify and arrange counselling and training to assist the Workable (NI) employees to improve their skills and abilities to do their job, build their confidence and help them cope and/or get over their mental illness.

A great number of the Workable (NI) clients have accessed and benefited greatly from the province wide counselling service we have on offer through Staffcare Services and a number of independent counsellors. Other training during the year included Essential Skills, IT and Self Assertiveness training along with one client receiving Pesticide Training for their work.

As part of the Workable (NI) Programme, the Employment Support Officer's are also able

to support the employers. They can advise on reasonable adjustments which can be made in the workplace and provide mental health awareness training to staff. This training is specific to the needs of the employer and is also sensitive to the amount of information the Workable (NI) employee wishes to disclose to their colleagues.

Although the Workable (NI) Programme is designed to assist individuals returning to work from unemployment, AMH has also found a great need to support individuals already in employment who are either off on long term sick or struggling to remain in work due to mental health problems. A great number of AMH's referrals are now cases were the ESO's are working alongside employers assisting them to help their staff remain in the workplace and manage their mental health successfully, thereby benefiting both the employee and employer.



# 11. THE ANNUAL TUGHAN LECTURE

Our Annual Tughan Mental Health Lecture to observe World Mental Health Day was held at Malone House. The Tughan Lecture was established in memory of a founder of AMH, Fredrick Charles Tughan CBE, and is sponsored by The Tughan Trust.

Hosting the evening was one of AMH's Patrons, UTV's Lynda Bryans. The guest speaker was Dr Nick Baylis. At Cambridge University, Nick has lectured "the skills of well-being" for seven years. The theme of the lecture was "Enhancing Employability".

Lynda Bryans kicked off the evening by sharing some of her own experiences, "Some years ago, a temporary mental illness resulted in my not being able to work for around 8 months. I'd lost confidence during this time and it was a real challenge trying to gradually find that sense of worth again, and to get back to doing the job I had once enjoyed.

AMH is helping so many people in similar circumstances. As well as helping to find employment opportunities and hands-on training placements, AMH recognises the huge value in encouraging and supporting clients to broaden and nourish skills they may already hold, but are finding difficult to recognise within themselves, perhaps because they haven't used these abilities in a while – like personal development, self-confidence and self-esteem.

These 'Employability Skills' are so important, especially for people who need a little extra support or who perhaps feel they're not ready

just yet for work. They can also be developed or learnt for use in other areas of life.

Recreational and social activities also encourage AMH's clients to access opportunities in their community and develop and maintain friends, interests and social networks.

It's been said that we should view life as one continuous learning experience, because continuous learning prepares us to take advantage of future opportunities".

Lynda then introduced Dr Nick Baylis to deliver the Tughan Lecture.

Commenting on the night Nick said, "I am quite delighted to be invited to speak at the Tughan Lecture in Belfast during World Mental Health Week. I have tried to offer highly practical ideas on how to enhance all-round well-being, with the aim of providing individuals with the know-how and inspiration to apply life-improving techniques on a daily basis for themselves and those

they care for. My presentation explored the everyday principles, strategies, skills and experiences that may serve as a catalyst to profoundly healthy, well-balanced, and good-hearted lives, rich in creative partnerships. I also explored how we can best overcome our fears and traumas, prevent depression and hyper-anxiety, nurture friendships and prevent illness. How we can positively channel our painful emotions rather than anaesthetize them; and how we can actively relax to improve our health".

Concluding the evening, AMH's Chief Executive, Ian Walters said, "How do I top that? Nick has delivered a highly interesting and thought provoking lecture, he has conveyed a host of highly practical suggestions with lots of humour and vivid illustrations, which I hope we can all put to use. I'd like to thank the Tughan Family for their continued support of AMH and for all those who attended the lecture."



## 12. VOLUNTEERING

At AMH we greatly appreciate the valuable contribution made to our work by volunteers. They are an essential part of our team and AMH clients' benefit from the enthusiasm, skills and experience the volunteers offer.

Volunteers continued to be involved in a range of roles providing invaluable support to staff and clients alike. Some were involved in teaching art, horticulture and catering, while others helped out on reception or with administration.

During the year 9 volunteers gave their time to AMH and clocked up a grand total of 2120.5 hours of work!

We want to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers across the various services for their time, energy, enthusiasm, skills and determination they have given through volunteering with AMH in the last year.

Jennifer McAuley - AMH New Horizons Belfast  
Mark Abraham - AMH New Horizons Craigavon & Banbridge  
Peter Moran - AMH New Horizons Fermanagh  
Winston Farrell - AMH New Horizons Fermanagh  
Patricia Boyle - AMH New Horizons Newry & Mourne  
Tony Dolaghan - AMH New Horizons Newry & Mourne  
Anne Morgan - AMH Newry Horizons Newry & Mounre  
Nikki Middlesworth - AMH Promote  
Trevor Boyle - AMH Promote

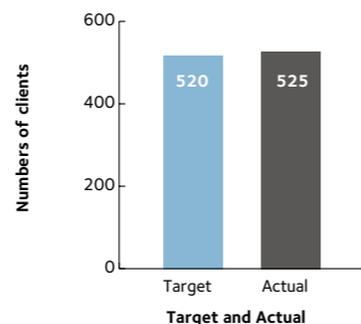
If you are interested in volunteering with AMH please contact the Volunteering Co-Ordinator on 028 9040 3726. You will be very welcome to join us.



# 13. KEY PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES 2009-2010

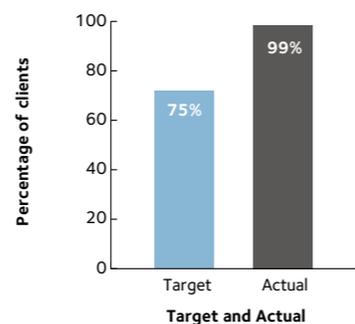
## 1. Number of clients participating in the ESF programme 2009-2010

Over the period 2009-2010 Action Mental Health's ESF New Horizons programme delivered training and employment programmes to 1305 clients with mental health problems. It aimed to recruit 520 new starts and successfully recruited 525 new clients.



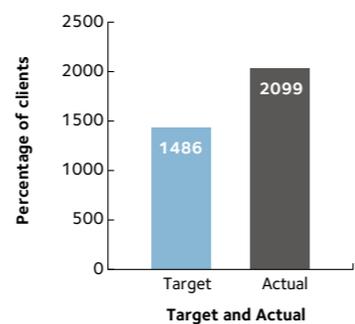
## 2. Number of accredited qualifications attained by non ESF funded clients

A 24% higher than anticipated number of non ESF funded clients participated in accredited programmes in this review period.

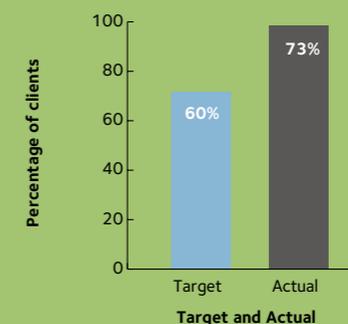


## 3. Number of accredited qualifications attained by ESF funded clients

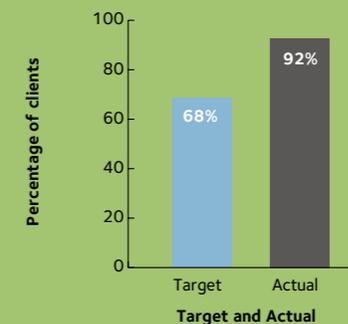
Accredited outcomes gained by ESF funded clients were 41% higher than targeted.



## 4. % of ESF funded clients completing training programmes



## 5. Client level of engagement in socially inclusive training (ESF funded clients)



## 6. Targeted V Actual paid and voluntary work outcomes secured for clients across services



## 14. DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING

AMH were delighted to be the nominated charity for many individuals and groups who took part in fundraising events throughout the year.

A big thank you to all those who gave of their time, your generosity is appreciated. We would also like to acknowledge those individuals who have kindly included Action Mental Health as a beneficiary in their wills.

AMH's work is made possible by generous support from Health and Social Care Trusts and the European Union.

AMH also wish to acknowledge the generosity of the many trusts, foundations and funding bodies who give so generously including the following who gave £1000 and above;

**Rank Foundation**  
**Children in Need**  
**Building Community Pharmacy**  
**Big Lottery Fund Awards for All**  
**Ulster Garden Villages**  
**The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund**  
**Steinberg Family Charitable Trust**  
**AE Harvey Charitable Trust**  
**John Atcheson Foundation**  
**The TBF & KL Thompson Trust**  
**Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce**  
**Bombardier Aerospace (NI) Foundation**  
**The Tughan Trust**

## 15. TREASURER'S REPORT

The results for the year to 31 March 2010 reflect activities in the first year of the current 3-year AMH Strategic Plan. During a year which saw the financial markets recover somewhat but the scale issues for the economy and latterly the public sector emerging, we were pleased to record an operating surplus of £81k from continuing operations in the year. This compares against a surplus of £15k in the previous year. Income derived from bank interest and dividends, recorded at £48k was down around 43% on the £83k achieved in 2009 due to the low interest rates, giving a surplus on ordinary activities of £129k compared to the previous year surplus of £98k.

These results are derived from increasing income from continuing operations by some £181k, or 4.0%, on the previous year, whilst total expenditure increased by £114k or 2.6%.

We are delighted that a very high proportion of our funds continue to be used directly in supporting our clients with 98.5% of our expenditure on such activities.

The global downturn in the financial markets of 2009 has seen a moderate recovery in this the 2010 year, and this has resulted in an unrealised gain of some £131k as at 31 March 2010. While this goes some way to offset the negative impact of the markets downturn (circa £249k) on AMH's investments against their cost, as the gains are unrealised, the impact on the balance sheet is nil as at 31 March 2010. Since the year end the market has remained generally flat and therefore if these investments were to be sold AMH would benefit directly from these gains.

As part of the operational plan it has been agreed that, in order to strengthen financial sustainability,

a measure of the reserve movement excluding investment fluctuations would be recorded. The annual target is to increase reserves by 10% towards an eventual goal of 50% of annual expenditure.

After the negative movement in reserves of some 14% last year to £837k, AMH has achieved an increase of some 18% or £152k and therefore, as at 31 March 2010, has a general fund of reserves of £989k.

A general fund of £989k equates to around 2.6 months operating expenditure, some way short of the AMH target of 6 months reserves.

### Further Challenges Ahead

While AMH has experienced the impact of the credit crunch on its investments, we are now entering a more prolonged period of public

## TREASURER'S REPORT CONTINUED

sector funding pressures, indeed cuts. How they are applied locally in Northern Ireland to the third sector is likely to have a fundamental impact on how AMH can deliver its client services going forward.

This annual report relates to the first year of AMH's 2009–2012 corporate strategic plan and many positive achievements have been made including the continuing improvement of the organisations financial management, both in terms of improved management reporting but also in terms of achieving efficiencies across the corporate services by reviewing, tendering and optimising supplier services.

The corporate services team and senior managers have worked through the year to identify further areas of efficiency and for commercialisation and this work will continue in earnest in the coming years.

Notwithstanding the efforts of all at AMH, with the high degree

of uncertainty as to the impact of public sector funding cuts, this is having a significant effect on the planning and management of the organisation. We are unaware of the scale and nature of the cuts that will be applied to AMH and therefore we are planning for a range of financial scenarios, limiting our investments in our estate and infrastructure and rapidly developing partnership arrangements with another similar organisation, to be adopted if proven to be mutually beneficial.

In this context despite the financial pressures on the organisation, the Board is content that they have a robust and sound set of financial procedures to manage the various challenges ahead. A surplus budget for the 2010/11 financial year has been developed and accepted by the Board which should continue to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation.

As a result of the changing health

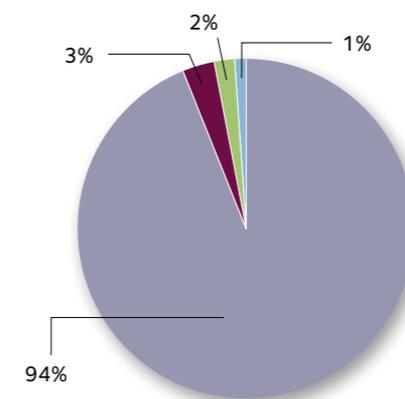
sector service requirements, commissioning and general funding pressures, we are about to commence on a rigorous viability study to develop a road map for AMH moving ahead positively and sustainably over the coming years. This work is targeted for completion by December 2010 and may have a significant impact by identifying fundamental changes for AMH. In the meantime AMH seeks to continue to develop its financial standing in line with its targets and prudent financial management given the uncertainty over future funding.

AMH would like to record it's thanks to all those who have provided valuable support to our work by giving of their time, money or influence, gifts in kind or sponsorship. Their vital contribution towards our work is both highly valued and much appreciated.

**Ross Boyd**  
Honorary Treasurer

### Income 2009/2010

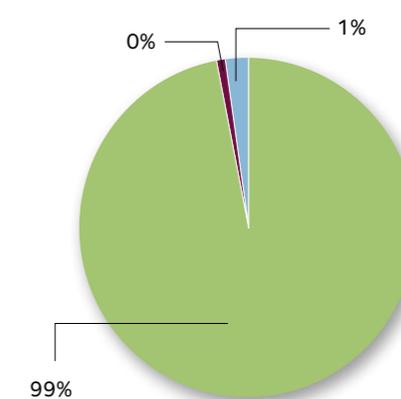
Total Income £4,713,189



- Charitable activities income £4,407,158 (94%)
- Voluntary income £141,799 (3%)
- Trading income £116,710 (2%)
- Investment income £47,522 (1%)

### Expenditure 2009/2010

Total Expenditure £4,584,185



- Charitable activities £4,514,969 (99%)
- Fundraising costs £20,755 (0%)
- Governance costs £48,461 (1%)

A full copy of the audited accounts for the year to 31st March 2010 can be obtained by contacting AMH Headquarters (see back page).

AMH is a charity recognised by the Inland Revenue under reference XN47959. The company is registered in Northern Ireland No. NI5568.

## 16. BOARD MEMBERS

<b>Chairman</b>	H W R Kohner
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	J L C Thompson, DL (stepped down Sep 09) R Mowbray (appointed Sep 09)
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	H Dougherty (resigned Sep 09) R Boyd (appointed Sep 09)
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Mrs P J Cross
<b>Members</b>	Mrs. K. Canavan M Carson R A Ferris, JP (resigned Sep 09) Mrs. S. Hillan E. Fee W B Perceval-Price T. McKeever C.B. McMurray Mrs. R. Strange

## 17. LOCAL CONTACTS

**AMH New Horizons,  
Antrim**  
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