



Pictured above: RehabCare service user, Derek Smith, catches up on the latest news with Programmes Supervisor, Eithne Kilty, in the relaxing surroundings of RehabCare's new Bailieborough centre.

RehabCare's new centre at the heart of the community

IMAGINE HAVING TO SPEND 20 HOURS A WEEK

a small bus, travelling narrow and windy country roads. Until recently, that's exactly what Derek Smith from Bailieborough in County Cavan had to do in order to attend the RehabCare centre in Cavan town, but not anymore!

Now, thanks to RehabCare's new centre in Bailieborough, Derek has a daily commute that would make the rest of us very jealous indeed. It takes him just five minutes to walk to the centre each day.

"I loved being in Cavan, but the move to Bailieborough has changed my life completely," says Derek. "For

starters, I've an extra four hours a day, time I would have previously spent commuting. I'm now able to engage much more with people from my hometown and it's something that I love. I'm bumping into old friends that I haven't seen for years. They've been wondering where I've been all this time!"

"There's only 20 of us here at the centre and the smaller numbers mean that there's a real family atmosphere. We keep an eye out for each other. The social scene is good too. We sometimes head out in the evening time - to the theatre or to see comedy shows. I live on my own, so the social element of the centre is really important to me."

“

I'm now able to engage much more with people from my hometown and it's something that I love. I'm bumping into old friends that I haven't seen for years.

”

The new RehabCare centre, which was developed with the help of the Health Service Executive North East region, is located in newly-built shared premises just a two-minute walk from Bailieborough town centre, ensuring that those who use the service are very much at the heart of the local community. In fact, all of the programmes on offer at the centre are designed to get service users out into the local community, whether that's by participating in equestrian skills or leisure activities at local sporting facilities, taking photos of local heritage sites as part of the camera club or exploring Cavan's beautiful lakes with the cycling club.

The centre's supported employment programme, Workability, has also helped service users to engage more with the local community. Five people from the RehabCare centre are currently working part-time in local shops and businesses, including Mark Smith who works ten hours a week in an architectural office, located in the same building as the RehabCare centre.

"We're very grateful to the employers who have come on board to date, but there's more to be done," says RehabCare Area Manager, Bernard McVeigh. "With the help of Sophie Maher, Programmes Supervisor in Cavan, plans are well underway to further develop the Workability-supported work programme during 2009 and it is hoped that in the near future, many new employers from Bailieborough will engage with the centre."



Pictured above: Service users in RehabCare's new resource centre in Bailieborough.

In addition to Workability and other community-based programmes, the busy RehabCare centre also offers independent living skills, relaxation activities, gardening and a creative work programme. This programme saw service users recently create a beautiful stain glass butterfly which they presented to President McAleese when she officially opened the centre, along with other businesses in the shared premises, at the end of November.

"Although the centre hasn't even been open for a year, I've already noticed a huge change in every single one of the people who attend the service here in Bailieborough," says Programmes Supervisor, Eithne Kilty. "It's really wonderful to see how their confidence levels have blossomed. They now feel part of the local community. We also recently welcomed two new people to the centre, both of whom have an acquired brain injury, and we hope to further extend our acquired brain injury service in the near future. With so much happening, it's really an exciting time for all of us at the centre." ■



Pictured above: RehabCare service user, Mark Smith, pictured hard at work in a local architectural office. Mark is currently one of five RehabCare service users who work in the local community as part of RehabCare Bailieborough's Workability programme.