

BIRT gets first English Accreditation

The Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust (BIRT) is delighted to announce that the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) has accredited its services in the North of England – becoming the first brain injury rehabilitation service in this country to achieve this highly prestigious status.

The three-year accreditation – running through until March 2009 – is awarded to the Trust's long-term residential services and

rehabilitation programmes at **Daniel Yorath House** in **Leeds**, **Redford Court** in **Liverpool** and **York House, York**, and also to our range of home and community-based rehabilitation programmes across the North of England.

This achievement represents the culmination of 15 months' detailed preparation in meeting rigorous standards laid down by CARF and will undoubtedly boost BIRT's standing as a provider of the highest quality rehabilitation services for people with acquired brain injury.

“ CARF has had well-developed, widely used standards in place for post acute brain injury rehabilitation since 1989. This achievement gives real reassurance to clients and families, and it also provides solace to funding bodies that we have solid and effective control procedures ”

Dr John Freeland, Consultant Neuropsychologist

What is CARF?

CARF is an independent, international non-profit body, founded in the United States in 1966. It provides accreditation in the human services field, focusing on the areas of rehabilitation, employment and community, children and families and ageing services. CARF has also accredited services in Canada since 1969 and in recent years has spread into Western European countries such as Sweden and Denmark. There are approximately 4,800 CARF-accredited providers serving around five million people per year, mostly in the United States.

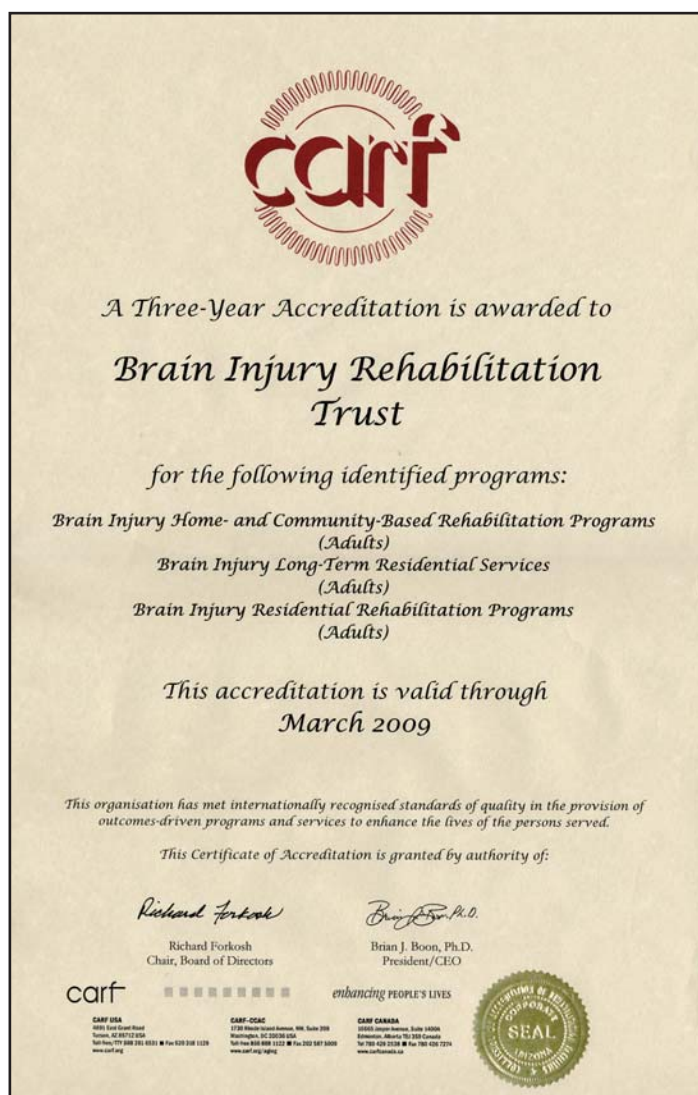
CARF standards are developed and constantly revised through a series of leadership panels, national advisory committees, focus groups and field reviews. The standards development process provides opportunities for the persons served and other stakeholders to be actively involved in developing CARF standards.

What does CARF mean for BIRT?

BIRT has always prided itself on delivering rehabilitation services of the highest quality for people with acquired brain injury. The CARF accreditation is therefore a very clear reaffirmation of the quality of our services across clinical and business practice to the outside world. Importantly, the assessment process was carried out by people who work in the field of rehabilitation, namely through peer review. It was also heavily focused on service user input and service user rights.

Ultimately, the achievement will mean an even better service for our clients, as well as providing reassurance for their families and enhancing our credibility with other stakeholders.

(For more information, visit www.carf.org.)



Barrie Oldham, Director of Operations for The Disabilities Trust, praised the enormous input from BIRT staff.

“I am delighted that CARF has made a particular recognition of the skill, excellence and commitment shown by our staff. The award is a testimony to their immense contribution in earning this award, which singles the Trust out as a provider of accredited quality brain injury rehabilitation.”

How did BIRT achieve the accreditation?

Starting in January 2005, the process involved a very thorough assessment of all aspects of the work of BIRT. All the individual services worked closely together to meet the prescribed standards laid down by CARF and to adapt practices and systems where necessary. For example, regular ‘roadshows’ and training days were held and clinical practice manuals were developed to help standardise practice across the organisation.

Earlier this year, a team of CARF surveyors from the United States visited BIRT’s office in Wakefield and our various services in the North of England. The surveyors were able to meet with a number of clients and their families, as well as funders. Thanks to the hard work of many BIRT staff, the visit was extremely well received, leading to the announcement of the award in May 2006.

“The initial process of seeking CARF accreditation has enabled us to improve services for our clients significantly”, says Professor Michael Oddy, Director of Clinical Services for BIRT. **“The ongoing nature of CARF accreditation ensures that that process of improvement continues.”**

The award of this accreditation will spread through to the remainder of BIRT’s services in the South of England (ie our other residential rehabilitation units and community services not already accredited). These services will be working towards accreditation over the course of the next year, with a view to a formal survey being undertaken in the spring of 2007.

The CARF survey report praised the strengths of BIRT in a number of key areas:

- ▶ ***Our positive, proactive behavioural model – we are commended for the depth and extent to which this is integrated throughout the organisation.***
- ▶ ***Our sensitivity in soliciting and responding to input from the persons served and to promoting their rights.***
- ▶ ***Our comprehensive process for evaluating programme accessibility and developing plans for improvement.***
- ▶ ***Our physical facilities, which provide an optimal, homelike setting for residential and rehabilitation services.***
- ▶ ***Our regular monthly visits by external managers, which provide comprehensive programme reviews, covering all areas necessary to ensure a safe and effective environment.***
- ▶ ***Our staff members, which have a strong commitment to the persons served and their needs, as demonstrated by their dedication, compassion and enthusiasm.***
- ▶ ***Our leadership team, which shows dedication and commitment to developing an exemplary rehabilitation programme for persons with acquired brain injury.***
- ▶ ***Our excellent relations with local housing authorities and other community stakeholders to provide a variety of options.***

Systems and procedures will continue to be monitored in line with the CARF standards to ensure conformance and to maintain the continuing improvement in the quality of our services.

www.birt.co.uk