

Mental Health  Support Group

Helping Us Bounce Back in Havering, Barking & Dagenham

Contacts: Chair at [henryhilaire@outlook.com](mailto:henryhilaire@outlook.com) or Secretary on 07985-983673 or [www.hubb.org.uk](http://www.hubb.org.uk)

**SEPTEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER**

Many thanks to all who brought goodies to our last meeting, both buffet food & raffle prizes, which helped to make the evening a success.

So did our Speaker, the psychiatrist **Dr Joanna Moncreiff**, whose challenging ideas about how Mental Health medication is being used aroused lots of comments & questions.

She told us that as well as being a Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry at University College, London, she has worked for 16 years as a psychiatrist for NELFT, first at Warley & now at Goodmayes Hospital, where she is also leading research into the effects of reducing antipsychotic medication. Her research assistant Zoe also attended, &

HUBB members are invited to participate in this project. (See page 4)  
**Dr Joanna is concerned that research so far into how anti-psychotics work on the human brain is inadequate & that it doesn't support the way drugs are being prescribed, or explain their side-effects.**

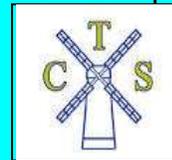


Although she warned us that no-one should stop their medication suddenly

nor without support from someone they trust, she had evidence that many people benefit from gradual withdrawal. She said Mental Health diagnoses & labels do not describe individual's lifestyles, & she agreed with some members that work stress, online bullying or loneliness might underlie the current increase in diagnoses of depression.

(continued on p 4)

A big Thank You again to Corbets Tey School for their help in printing this



HUBB

Newsletter

**FUTURE SPEAKERS**

We are glad that the Speaker at **HUBB's NEXT MEETING on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October**, 5-7pm in the Baptist Church Hall, Main Rd, Romford, will be **LORRAINE MOSS**, who helps people with Mental Health problems to access their benefits.

If you know anyone or any organisation which HUBB members would like to hear from, please contact the Vice Chair at [ecofriendlyangel62@gmail.com](mailto:ecofriendlyangel62@gmail.com) or the Secretary on 07985-983673, so that we can invite them to visit us

## WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

is on 10<sup>TH</sup> October

Come & support HUBB at the **IAMWHOLE** event, a nation-wide anti-stigma campaign in the YMCA building on Rush Green Road, Romford RM7 0PH (No 5 & 175 buses stop nearby) 2.0 to 5.30pm

Then join us at **Thrive LDN** in the Conference Room, Barking Learning Centre, 2 Town Square, Barking IG11 7NB from 4.0 to 5.0pm, for a Workshop exploring Mental Health in the Workplace, part of a city-wide movement to improve the way mental health problems are recognised & dealt with at work.

## TIDY YOUR GARDEN or RISK ARREST!

"A Cranham resident made history when he became the first Havering Council tenant to face court action after failing to maintain his garden in a neat & proper way". (reports *LB Havering News* on 12-9-17



"There is nothing worse than one garden in a road being overgrown when neighbours are keeping their gardens looking good in accordance with their Tenancy Agreement" said the Havering Cabinet Member for Housing.

The tenant got the required work done in the 14 days he was given to avoid arrest, but was still charged £955 costs.

## Instagram is "the worst Social Media for Mental Health"

Of the 5 social networks included in the Status of Mind survey published by the UK's Royal Society for Public Health this year, *YouTube* was the only site given a positive score by the nearly 1500 people aged 14-24 years who responded. *Twitter* was 2<sup>nd</sup>, then *Facebook*, then *Snapchat*.

All sites got positive scores for self-identity, self-expression, community building & emotional support. But all were marked down for sleep quality, bullying, & body image. All - except *YouTube*, - were associated with increased depression & anxiety. Instead, *YouTube* got high marks for providing trustworthy health information, helping to reduce depression, anxiety & loneliness.

"Extensive social media use can set unrealistic expectations & create feelings of inadequacy & low self-esteem" the report said. It may promote a "compare & despair" attitude.

The report calls for "safe social media use" to be taught in schools.

## More "public nuisances" prevented:

Drivers in Barking & Dagenham who perform street races or stunts, drive in convoy, rev their cars or sound their horns inappropriately in certain parts of the borough - & those who come to watch - will be stopped & may be fined by a new council & police imposed Public Space Protection Order. (From *Oneboroughlive.co.uk*)

**ONE LAW FOR THEM.....Did you know there is a law discouraging Charities, among others, from spending more than £20,000 on a campaign to influence government policy in the year before an election?**

As this would barely pay for a few leaflets or one page in a newspaper, more than 100 charities objected. The government commissioned a review of this law, but has now decided not to change it. *(As reported in The Third Sector newsletter of 22-9-17)*

“How are charities supposed to speak up for the most vulnerable & marginalised people in society when they are at risk of being penalised by the lobbying act?” said Tamsyn Barton, a charity spokesperson. Others called the decision deeply intimidating”, “very disappointing”, & “unacceptable”.

**The Cabinet Office spokeswoman said the rules are “to prevent any individual, company or organisation exerting undue influence in terms of an election outcome”.**

The CEO of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations said “The government made a clear commitment to reviewing the impact of this law, & to reject any changes out of hand can only weaken the voice of those that charities serve. These reasonable & considered recommendations were recently endorsed by politicians from all parties in the House of Lords, & the government must reconsider”

*Tender-handed stroke a nettle  
And it stings you for your pains;  
Grasp it like a man of mettle,  
And it soft as silk remains!*

**Wisdom from Aaron Hill, who lived 1685-1750**

**One in 3 GP “sick notes” are for psychiatric problems.**

This makes them the most common reason for people to take time off work. Only half of these had a known diagnosis, & in the last 2 years there was a 14% rise in those relating to anxiety & stress.

**Almost half of ESA benefit claimants in England are for mental & behavioural disorders.**

This is the first time this information has been collected & analysed. It shows that 1 in every 5 Mental Health related sick note is for longer than 12 weeks, so more support is needed to help people return to work, said *Dr Boardman from The Royal College of Psychiatrists.*

Although GPs will write suggestions to the employer, such as staggered work days, these need to be tailored to the individual’s needs, he said. **He suggested discrimination can leave those with Mental Health issues outside the labour force completely.**

**STOPTOBER**



is here again.

**Stop smoking for 28 days & you are 5 times more likely to stop for good!**

*Save Money*

*Feel Healthier*

*Protect your Family*

**Replace ciggies with prescription tablets, e-cigarettes, nicotine patches or gum.**

Support in Havering: People attending Harold Wood Mental Health Clinic & their spouses will be offered free, trained support, starting with reducing cigarettes &/or vaping.

Support for all is via “Stoptober” online, including daily emails & encouragement.

**Dr Joanna Moncrieff continued:**

Dr Joanna explained that antipsychotic & neuroleptic medications were first used in the early 1950s as Tranquilisers, to numb emotional responses, usually to very stressful situations. These medications make changes in the brain similar to alcohol, reduce immediate distress & improve sleep. They do the same to animals. They do not cure any illnesses.

Dr Joanna said definitions of "relapses" are unclear, & they can happen even when people are taking their medication: another argument against its long-term use. Dutch research has shown that patients who gradually reduced their medication recovered faster than those who remained on it longest.

Several Members described their unsuccessful efforts to get GP support for reducing their medication, especially because of unpleasant side-effects – which may be ignored by professionals. Dr Joanna said their causes are not yet well understood, but GPs are supposed to check their patients' use of antipsychotics. There is little evidence, she said, to support current prescribing practices, but repeated that the withdrawal symptoms of stopping them quickly can be dangerous.

She has applied for funding for the *RADAR : Research into Antipsychotic Discontinuation & Reduction* project, to understand the pros & cons of reducing & potentially stopping anti-psychotic medication. She invited Members with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or a related

condition who are taking this medication, to take part in the study by sending their name, address, phone no. & email, if any, to *RADAR Research & Development*  
*Maggie Lilley Suite*  
*Goodmayes Hospital, IG3 8XJ*  
for an initial discussion about the project with one of the researchers.



### **It's time for our 'Flu Jabs!'**

Healthy Living in Havering reminds us that "the flu virus is contained in the millions of tiny droplets that come out of the nose & mouth when someone who is infected coughs or sneezes. It can survive on hard surfaces for up to 24 hours." So:

**Catch it in a tissue & bin it!**

**Wash your hands frequently.**

#### **FREE JABS are available for those who**

- \*Are aged 65 or over, or under 11 years.
- \*Have a medical condition, such as COPD, asthma, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, etc
- \*Are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person
- \*Are living in a long-stay residential care home
- \*Are pregnant

The jab is so quick & simple these days, it's over before you realise it's done; so no excuses!

Both Optimists & Pessimists contribute to society: the Optimist invents the Aeroplane, the Pessimist invents the Parachute

Just a thought from George Bernard Shaw