

Slough Mental Health News



Issue 12

For Justice and Equal Rights for Customers of Slough Mental Health Services

Oct 2008



Happy Birthday to Us

After a troubled childhood, a battered baby at the age of 1 month, Slough Mental Health News has survived to the grand old age of 1 year old.

To celebrate this event we will be expanding onto the internet with our new website:

www.sloughmental.co.uk

Here you can read the latest issue, browse through the back issues, send in letters & articles, or subscribe and get SMH News emailed to you free every month.

Other features will include an art & photo gallery and anything else we think up later on.

I guess a poetry section would be good too.

Want anything else?

I'll try and make it happen.

In the interests of confidentiality any of your names mentioned in the paper newsletter will be abbreviated to initial letters on the website so for example Harry will become H.

Any faces in photos will be covered with 'smilies' so you won't be recognised in the street. If anyone doesn't want to be anonymous let me know and I'll sort it.

The website is up and running now. Got an interesting story? Just email it in to editor@sloughmental.co.uk

Management Response To Daycentre Vote

For those of you who weren't at the meeting when I made the announcement, here is an extract from Susanna Yeoman's email.

'Whilst the West Wing came out on paper as the highest scoring – there are shortfalls as you rightly point out. For example, your comments about access to meals and insecurity about the future are highly valid, and unless we can sort out these points satisfactorily then we could not proceed with this option.'

The West Wing's future is insecure until May 2009, the food problem may not be solved either, especially if Slough Town FC get their stadium.

Ward 10 Code of Silence



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Frank Toner To Leave Slough

Allegations have been made that this paper rarely publishes good news (something which might be said of BBC TV News and most other newspapers these days). Like anyone else, we can only print good news if there is some. This month however, we do have some good news.

Someone once told me that relations between Mental Health Services in Slough and Mental Health Customers (us) started to go pear shaped when Jane Wood left Slough. Well she's returned and Frank's going, so fingers crossed folks, the Frank Toner Show will soon be over and perhaps we'll see a change of attitude round here.

I don't have a photograph of Frank and have never met him although he did call for this paper to be censored. (A few weeks before it was banned from distribution at the MIND controlled 'Sunrise Club' Daycentre.)

For the full story of 'The Month They Tried to Ban Us', read issues 1 to 3 in the back issues section of our website.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN !



UFO Seen in Black Park Dog With 3 Balls

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Ward 10 - Code of Silence

There has been much controversy over conditions in Ward 10 and of the banning of the mentally ill from visiting their friends there. Having read Trish Fairlie's article in Locality News, I was less than convinced by what she had to say.

As we know, John The Forunner exposed the ban and had it abolished. Some months earlier Mike P, then Chair of SMHUG, wrote a letter to Nicky Holmes (Ward 10 Manager) asking if the ban existed and got no reply. I decided to email Nicky Holmes and ask the same question, I got an automated reply that she was on 'annual leave' and to this day no answer to my question (though now of course, thanks to John, I know the answer). There seems to be a policy here of doing whatever they like and then ignoring any questions and hoping they'll just go away.

The Visitors Ban was an example of Ward 10 management acting as a Law unto Themselves behind a Code of Silence. Their actions certainly had very little to do with the Laws of England:

I'm no lawyer but was this ban not a criminal offence under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?

Even if it were legal, it would still be unfair, immoral and stigmatising to ban all mentally ill people from visiting their friends just because persons unknown of mental health unknown might be sneaking booze or drugs to their friends. So all mentally ill people are drug pushing troublemakers? And all sane people

don't push drugs? How mad is that?

When the ban was abolished there was a 'failure of communication' - the staff were not told and the ban continued. We weren't told who the missing link in the chain of command was and we may never be told, but I'd put my money on Nicky.

Did she ignore the orders of her superiors in the hope that they too might just go away?

Fortunately, John did not go away and the ban was finally overturned.

Coming back to Trish Fairlie's article: if her Audits and Acute Care Forum are so effective then how come they never noticed the Visitor Ban?

Why did she never notice it?

Why did Mark Hardcastle not notice it either?

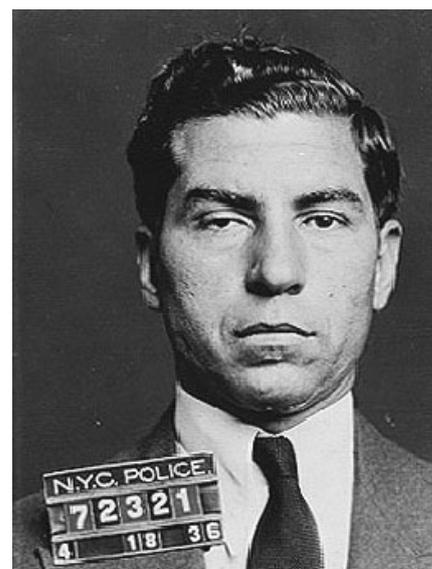
Were they all blind?

Or were they turning a blind eye?

John was refused membership of the Acute Care Forum for 'Having his own agenda'. Who's agenda was he meant to have Trish? Yours??

I sincerely hope the staff team on Ward 10 are 'committed and enthusiastic', and are 'embracing the opportunity to change and work towards creating a positive culture and approach'. Though judging by past experience I doubt you're so in touch with your 'ground troops' as to know what they're doing, let alone what they're thinking.

I'm intrigued as to how such a striking personality change could be effected... Did you perform exorcisms or just sack the manager?



In the world of Organized Crime breaking the law and doing immoral stuff under a code of silence is recognised as useful and necessary business tools. Isn't this attitude a bit out of place in the NHS though?

Do we really want these kind of people running the new psychiatric unit at Upton Hospital?

Or even the old psychiatric unit at Wexham Park?

If the law has been broken here in an effort to impose a visitor ban that goes against everything the NHS stands for, then those who are responsible should resign quietly or be prosecuted and sacked.

Do East Berkshire NHS think they're above the law? If the management fail in their duty to protect the rights of patients and punish those who disgrace the NHS they will find out.

Never trust anyone who says 'Trust Me'.

Readers Letters

Dear Ed,

I am writing as I was wondering if other service users have noticed the user unfriendly voice that greets one so often when calling C.M.H.T. Reception.

I find this basic lack of attention to detail for such a fundamental position where vulnerable people call a Mental Health Team quite astonishing.

Anyone in business knows that reception is the first point of contact for any company. 'Image' in business you will be told is everything. A company's whole image is formed by the quality of customer care at the first point of contact or sharp end of one's business.

Come on C.M.H.T. You of all people should be able to suss out at interview and employ less aggressive voices that do not immediately put one on the defensive and are more suitable for greeting "the most vulnerable group in society" when they call you.

Astonished of Slough

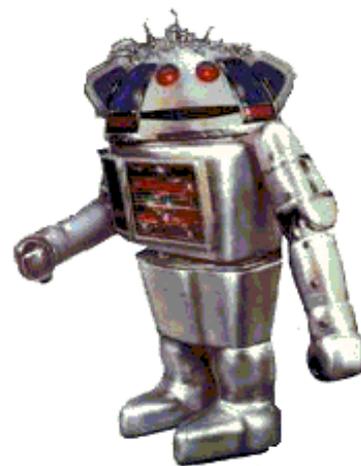
Hi,

I found the CMHT's Locality News surprisingly interesting, only two points as a service user response:

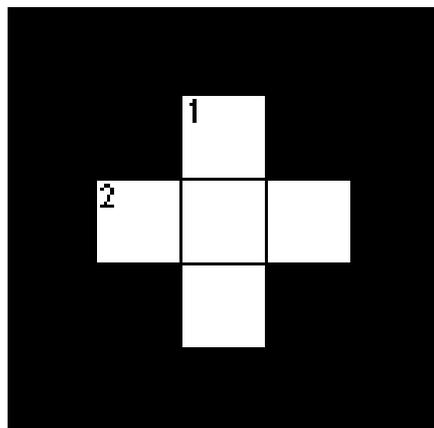
1. Susanna Yeoman's article seems laudibly to meet most users worries about the future of our service. However Susanna please note, you twice mention 'our' service users. Sorry but I'm not 'your' service user. I'm just a service user and to be precise a user of your services to the community.
2. Dr Matthew Knight (Clinical Psychologist's) article; When describing what is a psychologist and that you 'are not medical doctors and do not prescribe medication' Sorry but this reads as an awful admission; I'm sure never made clear to many service users who've spent a lifetime sometimes under Psychiatrists that their only job was to treat people with drugs.

Whilst psychologists being employed albeit very belatedly by WPH is a welcome development; I ask has it taken so long to recognise the need for the service you are now offering? Has it only now become so apparent to you??

Mental Mickey Slough East



Very Quick Crossword



Down

1. Cat

Across

2. Hat

If We're Not Us Then Who The Hell Are We ?

Most of the names given to 'Mental Health Service Users' are pretty insulting and being called a 'User' (an insult in itself) isn't any better.

I tend to replace the word 'User' with 'Customer', another alternative is 'Survivor' but we could really do with something better.

The gay movement took a word that used to just mean 'happy', they made it their own and went from strength to strength. Now I'm not saying we should call ourselves 'cheerful' or 'the jolly movement' but there's an important lesson here.

One idea I did have was 'mentalist': If feminism fights for the rights of females then mentalism must take

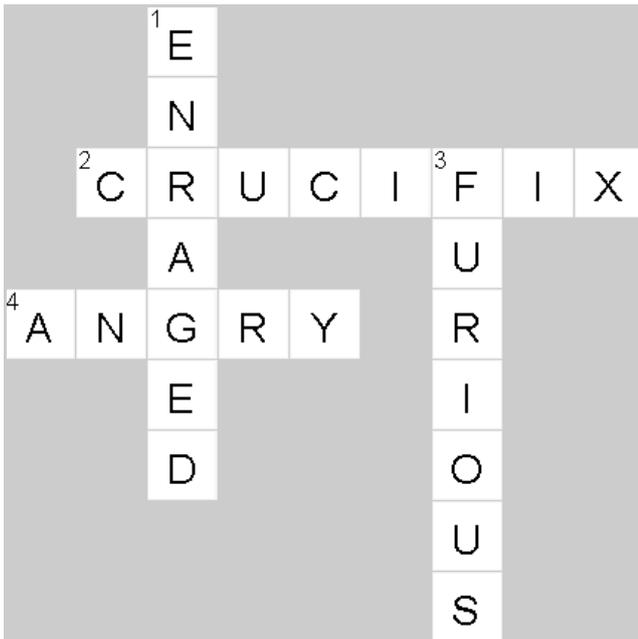
up the fight for the rights of the mentalists. Mentalist also has a professional ring to it like Physicist or Psychiatrist.

In this the first internet issue of SMH News I call upon my readers to send in their suggestions for a name by which we may be known when we need be known as anything more than men and women.

Go on, have a go, if you come up with something really good we'll have to make you a 'Hero of Mentalism', declare you as one in the paper, maybe get some medals cut...

It's hard to fight for your rights when you don't have a name to write on your banners.

Last Issue's 'Cross' word Solution



UFO in Black Park



Here it is, an Unidentified Floating Object in Black Park lake.

The tail section seems to be almost luminous and there appears to be more of this object below the waterline.

What could it be ? Any ideas ?
I have one, but yours might be more interesting.

Fascinating Facts

It takes 8 minutes for the light from the sun to reach our eyes.

Blueberry Jelly Bellies were created especially for Ronald Reagan.

Despite the many rat-infested slums in New York City, rats bite only 311 people in an average year. But 1,519 residents are bitten annually by other New Yorkers.

Donald Duck's middle name is Fauntleroy.

Drivers tend to drive faster when other cars are around. It doesn't matter if they are in front, behind or beside them.

In 1983, a Japanese artist made a copy of the Mona Lisa completely out of toast.

In 1984, a Canadian farmer began renting ad space on his cows.

It cost 7 million dollars to build the Titanic and 200 million to make a film about it.

Most cows give more milk when they listen to music.

No one knows why, but 90 percent of women who walk into a department store immediately turn to the right.

The Dog With 3 Balls



**“Only two things are infinite,
the universe and human stupidity,
and I’m not sure about the former.”**

Albert Einstein