

# Hear Us Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3

November - December 2003

24 High Street, London,  
SE25 6EZ

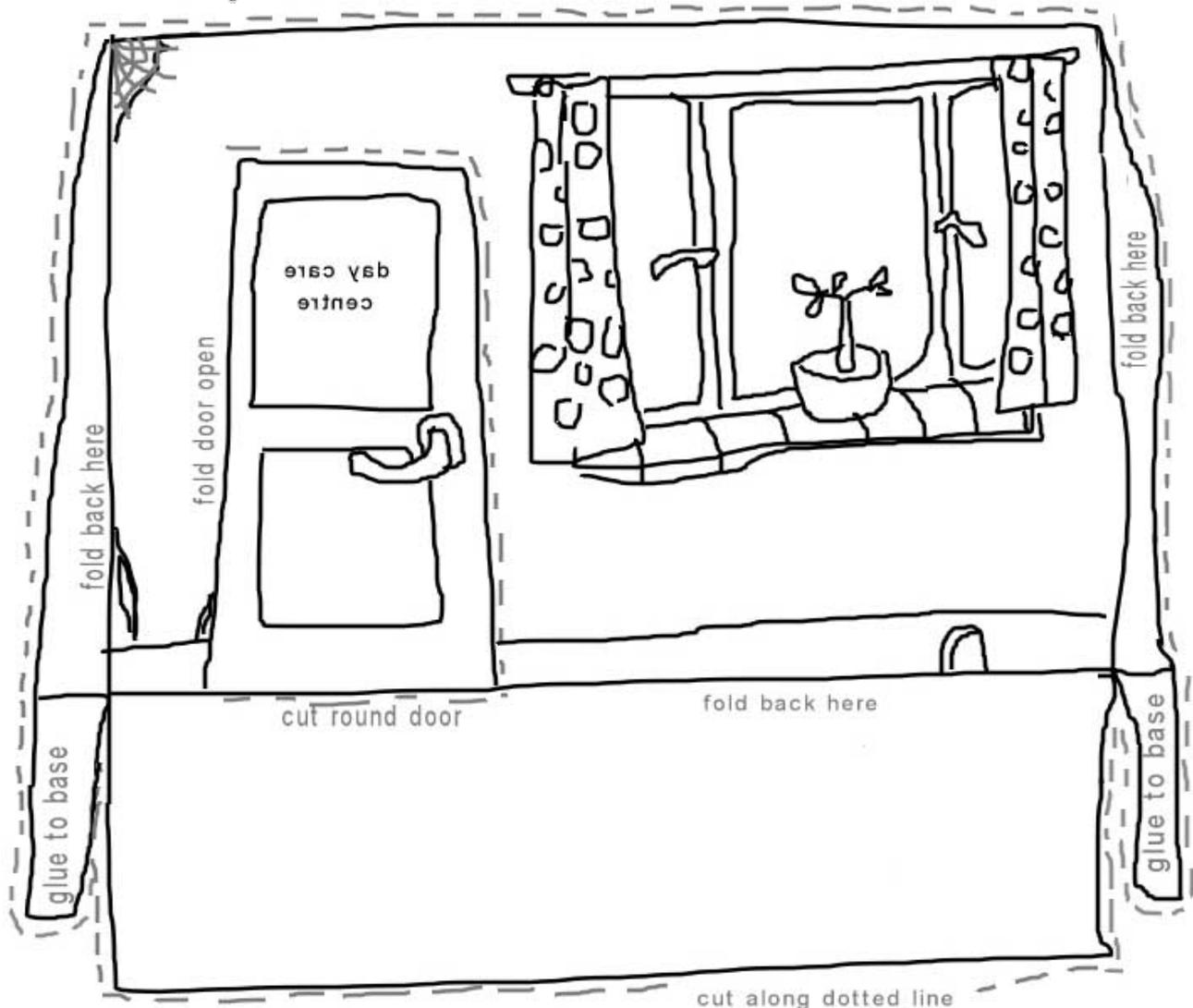
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## Do-It-Yourself DAYCARE



Cleaning problems 1 & 2 • Upsetting the people when they don't need it • Fury over "Bonkers Bruno" Headline • Call for urgent action on drug regulation as second SSRI is withdrawn for under 18s • Coming off psychiatric drugs • and



## ABOUT HEAR US

We are an independent group, run by service users and survivors. To seek out and put forward user and survivor views on mental health issues: to promote positive mental health, to challenge apathy and ignorance within the community, to challenge tokenism and ensure that everyone is respected as an individual and is given equal rights and opportunities.

Hear Us is a group for users of mental health services in the London Borough of Croydon. The Group was formed in 2002 as the representative voice for mental health service users/survivors.

The Group facilitates Croydon User Council, with regular meetings and an Open Forum for any service user who lives in the Borough of Croydon.

Hear Us has a co-ordinator and team of project workers and volunteers. Hear Us attends committee meetings with South London and Maudsley Trust (SLAM) and Croydon Primary Care Trust (PCT), formerly the Health Authority. It also attends service user meetings throughout the Borough.

### HEAR US AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To actively campaign with users on issues raised by users themselves.
- To reach out to all service users to encourage and support participation in Hear Us and Croydon User Council.
- To actively oppose discrimination against service users in Croydon.
- To provide a forum in which Croydon User Council can discuss and debate current concerns.

*Hear Us also participates in the following:* - Mental Health Partnership - the local implementation team for national service framework items.

Clinical Governance - a framework through which the National Health Service requires the South London and Maudsley trust to monitor its ongoing improvement.

Acute Care Forum - a meeting designed to improve care at the Bethlem.

Advocacy Review Meetings.

Daycare Review Steering group.

Involvement in Mental Health Advisers Group, a service user group who provide quality training by sharing their experiences to raise awareness and contribute towards improving services

Women's Strategy Meeting & BME Strategy Meetings

## ABOUT CROYDON USER COUNCIL

Croydon User Council is a group who were set up to bring service users together, both as individuals and representatives of resource centres. They meet to exchange current ideas and issues relevant to their resource centre, services in general or matters considered relevant to the service user movement. They represent Croydon service users in meetings regarding Croydon Mental Health Services and communicate any issues raised with the hope of achieving input, debate or resolution in decisions relating to mental health care and promotion.

The Council convened in October 2002 to discuss the forthcoming service user conference, which they successfully planned and facilitated. They now meet on the first Wednesday of every month. A number of items raised within the User Council are included in our Newsletter along with a summary of each User Council meeting.



The Council has worked carefully and methodically to develop its own constitution and devise a set of House Rules and Terms of Reference to ensure that the committee runs smoothly and feels well supported. Part of our commitment to supporting one another has been the setting up of a weekly drop-in at the Hear Us offices in South Norwood, where all or any service user can come along and talk, share experiences or just be amongst friendly like minded people.

Currently, the Council is made up entirely of service users, although there is an 'open' slot at the end of their meetings to which anyone is welcome to come along and contribute. We extend invitations to professionals and others with an interest in mental health services in Croydon, to contribute towards our work.

At present, we are working towards increasing representation from within the Resource centres so if anyone is interested in joining Croydon User Council or contributing towards their work of representing service users in meetings, please do let us know by contacting Ken Taylor at Hear Us.

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT CROYDON USER COUNCIL MEETING**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 1 – 4 pm

***All Croydon Service Users are invited to the open part of the meeting which is held between 3 and 4 pm on the first Wednesday of the month.***

The Hear Us Drop-In is held every Tuesday evening from 5 – 8 pm.

### **SUMMARY OF USER COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER**

#### **Ward Round Audit**

Service Users have been invited to become involved in the process of auditing a number of services provided by South London and Maudsley Trust (SlAM). A number of service users have already undertaken training in order to prepare for a forthcoming audit of Ward Rounds. The User Council was informed that the pilot Ward Round Audit would be being held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October at Westways. The audit would involve interviewing service users who had recently participated in a Ward Round, to respond to a questionnaire detailing their experience. Further Audit training would be provided by Premila Trevedi (SlAM Training Department), the dates have yet to be confirmed.

#### **Drayton Road**

Drayton Road is a former Social Workers' Club which will eventually become a service user day centre and office space for Hear Us. The intention is for Drayton Road to be a user led project. Planning has been underway for several months now, although this has been held up by the necessity to completely refurbish and renovate the premises. Unfortunately the current budget for refurbishment would not cover all of the work required, however this would not be an obstacle to achieving the main aim which was to make the building safe, watertight and warm. The budget and costing had been assessed by SlAM's Capital Planning department and had now been agreed, enabling work to go ahead.

#### **Lantern Hall**

Concerns have been raised regarding current and future Lantern Hall practices. The main issue had been whether there was equality of access for their services and what their future plans might be. We therefore entered into correspondence with the management to request further clarification and a copy of their assessment criteria and discharge statistics. Lantern Hall confirmed that they too were uncertain about planned changes. They provided us with assessment and discharge forms but were unable to disclose their assessment criteria and discharge statistics due to confidentiality issues. We have subsequently written to the Acting Borough Director of SlAM to request further clarification.



### **SlaM Annual Report / Day Services Review**

In September 2003 SlaM produced their Annual Report. The Report has caused a furore amongst service users because an item headed 'Getting Help To People When They Need It' had contained incorrect information regarding what services were currently available in Croydon. Hear Us wrote to Stuart Bell, Chief Executive of SlaM, asking how he intended to rectify the situation and had received a response. Pages 7 – 9 of this Newsletter contain details of the Annual Report's

Discrepancy and the aforementioned correspondence are contained in this newsletter. Feed back to the CUC meeting on the Day Care Review was limited due to issues of confidentiality.

### **Local Implementation Team (LIT) Mental Health Partnership Executive**

Ken Taylor described the purpose and work of the 'LIT' team, of which Hear Us is a member. LIT is more commonly known as the Mental Health Partnership and is made up of 'key stakeholders' such as service user representatives (Hear Us), MIND, SlaM, Community Health Council and Croydon Primary Care Trust. The purpose of the team is to plan and oversee the development of mental health services in Croydon and where they stand in relation to nationally defined standards (Mental Health National Service Framework etc). SlaM undertakes an annual 'self- assessment' of how they compare with these national standards using a method known as the 'Traffic Light System' i.e.. Red, Amber and Green . If a service is assessed as Red, it means it's failing, Amber indicates room for improvement and Green is O.K. The LIT team then independently review SlaM's findings and make amendments, where appropriate. The last LIT meeting had focussed its attention on Crisis Resolution Services and single sex wards due to disagreement about whether these services had in fact achieved a 'Green'. Some participants felt that whilst some of the items may technically be green, they failed the spirit of the standard.

### **Open Forum**

John Haseler, Commissioning Manager for mental health services at the Croydon Primary Care Trust attended the last CUC meeting. John explained the different aspects of his job. As a commissioner he is responsible for commissioning the services to be provided within the borough from amongst the voluntary sector eg. Mind and the Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health (APCMH) and the statutory sector ie. SlaM and Croydon Health Authority. He is also responsible for overseeing and evaluating how services are run.

Croydon User Council raised their concerns about the 'Traffic Light' system of self assessment and their disagreement with the inclusion of Crisis Resolution Services and single sex accommodation in receiving a 'Green Traffic Light'. John noted the concerns and agreed to question the relevant authorities and to alter the assessments if appropriate. The Council then went on to discuss the progress of the black minority ethnic strategy and other relevant items such as the poor quality of food provided at the Bethlem.

### **OPEN MEETING**

In addition to the 'open' slot at their monthly meetings, Hear Us and Croydon User Council hold an Open Meeting to which all Croydon Service Users are invited to attend approximately every three months. The meetings are held at Friends Meeting House in central Croydon from 1 – 3, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2003. Our first Open Meeting, held on 20<sup>th</sup> August, was attended by 15 service users including members of Hear Us. The meetings are designed to be social as well as productive and therefore are kept informal, with an open agenda. The meeting was positive and the following issues were raised: -

Open/Closed meetings

Means Tested Care – charges for day services

Committee meeting training

Benefits advice

Service User Social Club





Dear Hear Us

### Social Contact

I note with interest the flier in the latest Newsletter for the Hear Us Social Club commencing on 16 September.

Firstly, whilst I wish this venture every success, it is unlikely to be frequented by those living in the south of the borough who have problems in travelling any distance from their immediate locality. Indeed, this phenomenon became apparent when, pending the closure of the Crescent in New Addington, clients offered alternative placements at Lantern Hall or Tamworth Road were obliged to decline due to their inability to countenance travelling to Central Croydon.

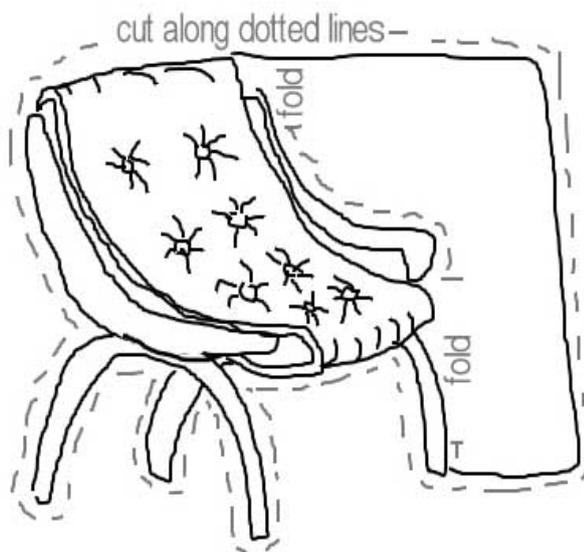
Secondly, the emboldened persuasive phraseology at the foot of this flyer is merely a **heart sink** indication to the more **reticent, faceless and inarticulate client** that this is typical provisions that cater exclusively for the **personable or outgoing**. Although we endeavour to be open-minded, we invariably find ourselves **overwhelmed and frazzled** by such gatherings, and consequently ultimately opt for self-help rather than continually submerging our precarious sense of self-identity among them. Indeed, like the mental health service itself, auxiliary providers of social facilities appear to be imbued with a certain rigid bias toward the **confidence culture**, consequently ostracising, whether by accident or design, those who are able to either manifest or feign this attribute. Moreover, a proposed new social contact group of quiet calibre for those who cannot countenance feisty gatherings that was envisaged by the Social Development Team as becoming operational earlier this year has failed to materialise.

As so many users and survivors are being failed in this respect, why do not providers collaborate on the possibility of occasional availability of social clubs providing a **therapeutically calming atmosphere** with some appropriate title such as **Quiet Space**? This additional type of provision, incorporating suitable conditions both for reticent and for others of a more assertive nature when experiencing occasional plunges in moral, could be piloted on the basis of limited frequency attendance might allay potential providers' fears formerly expressed to me of making reticent people reclusive. On the contrary, I myself consider that these alleged concerns point to a certain neurotic fear on the part of both the mental health service and pastoral care providers of any radical departure from the current confidence culture. Consequently, both fail to realise that clients of a more faceless nature are devoid of any appropriate means of gradual acquisition of self-identity.

I trust that the above has proved informative.

Yours truly, *Name Withheld*

Recommended reading: *The highly sensitive person* by Elaine Aron, whose findings are gaining momentum in both the USA and UK.



The social club at Hear Us

**WHEN?** Every Tuesday evening 5 pm until 8 pm

**WHERE?** Hear Us, 24 High Street,  
South Norwood, SE25 6EZ

**HOW DO I GET THERE? BUS:** 157, 410 or 75 **RAIL:** Norwood Junction **TRAM:** Harrington Road



## Critical Mental Health Forum

*What is Critical Mental Health Forum?* The Critical Mental Health Forum is a group of mental health service users, carers, professionals, academics and others who are critical of current theory and practice in mental health services. It has been meeting since January 2001.

*What does Critical Mental Health Forum do?* The Forum holds a regular public meeting each month. Each meeting starts with a round-up of news about relevant conferences, meetings and other developments. This is followed by a talk given by an invited speaker, which leads to a lively discussion. Recent topics have included drug company funding, the Disability Rights Commission, welfare benefits, the Human Rights Act, link worker schemes, and employment and mental health.

Remaining speaker for 2003 is Jim Read on drug-free mental health care (19 November The Plough, 27 Museum Street).

*What can I expect?* Meetings have a (rotating) chair and secretary, and are often lively and always friendly! There is an emphasis on listening to the views of attendees, and discussing sensitive issues in a way which shows respect for others. People choose what to disclose about their own interest in mental health. The Forum has no funding so a collection is made for the cost of the room, and people contribute what they can afford.

*Where are the meetings?* Meetings are usually on the third Wednesday of each month from 6.30pm until 8.30pm. The venue for the next meeting is The Plough, 27 Museum Street, just around the corner from the British Museum. There is also a social meeting afterwards in the pub.

*How can I find out more?* Notes of previous meetings and details of forthcoming meetings can be found on the Critical Psychiatry Network: <http://www.critpsynet.freeuk.com/criticalmentalhealth.htm>

*If you want to go on an email list to receive details of each meeting (as well as lots of information about other 'critical' activities and events) please contact Dave Harper at [d.harper@uel.ac.uk](mailto:d.harper@uel.ac.uk) or read the emails at <http://www.psychminded.co.uk/criticalmentalhealth.htm>*

*If you would like to come along then please contact a planning group member to confirm the meeting date and venue: Chris Freudenberg ([c.d.freudenberg@which.net](mailto:c.d.freudenberg@which.net)), Dave Harper ([d.harper@uel.ac.uk](mailto:d.harper@uel.ac.uk)), Des Gaynor ([des@dgaynor.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:des@dgaynor.freeseve.co.uk)), Janet ([janetcmhf@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janetcmhf@yahoo.co.uk)), Louisa Mackrell ([Louisa.Mackrell@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:Louisa.Mackrell@slam.nhs.uk), 07909 693031), Mike Slade ([m.slade@iop.kcl.ac.uk](mailto:m.slade@iop.kcl.ac.uk))*

### **CLEANING PROBLEMS 1, By Ms Daemon**

O the kitchen floor! It is dirty, so dirty. Why does the very thought of washing it set up a how of NO CAN DO! In my mind? Why does it fill me with dread and horror? Weeks go by, months in which I cook and wash up, use the washing machine (see! I am independent!), go padding up and down the floor, the evermore filthy floor. On the odd occasion I sweep up. That's ok. And I clean the cat food part. But not the rest. Why not? Aren't I ashamed? Yes, but not enough. The thought occurs to me – could I wash someone else's kitchen floor? Oh yes! I could do that with something approaching relish. I imagine my daughter's floor, for example. I could do that! Or my friend's. Yes! No problem, if all the equipment is there. Would they let me though? Would I let *them* clean *mine*? As a swap, say. No way, probably. I'd be standing there watching them, thinking *I* should be doing that! Why can't *I* do that? Well, why can't I wash my own kitchen floor? This is a question I will take with me on my next visit to my psychiatrist. He will be interested in my medication, how I'm eating and sleeping. He may even be interested in my delusions (God forbid!). But me, I'm only interested in why I can't wash my own kitchen floor.

Article taken from Southwark Mind Newsletter August 2003





## Upsetting the people when they don't need it

I must say that I was surprised to read in SLaM's 'Annual Report', that they have 'improved day care delivery' in the borough 'to provide targeted treatment and support'. This apparently includes 'a wide range of care including individual and group talking therapies' at Tamworth Road RC. In case you were wondering; yes this report was referring to Tamworth Road in Croydon. Apparently they also help with 'life skills, assertiveness and employment'. All this under the heading 'Getting Help To The People When They Need It'.

I have no doubt that SLaM are doing *more* than helping people back into work, but I see and hear very little on the so called 'targeted treatment and support' areas apparently improved upon at Tamworth Road or any other resource centre within Croydon for that matter! In fact, the 'improved day care delivery' is so obviously not just in decline, but deteriorating rapidly into thin air. In all fairness, a number of dedicated staff throughout the borough are rushed off their feet, trying to cope with increasing caseloads, extra duties and so on...

The problem is, as SL&M are well aware, even if this report was a mistake and was not meant to be printed (and it should never have been printed), now there is no way of retracting it. The report is printed for all to see, including the Primary Care Trust, The Minister for Health, the government and the press and I am sure that they will not be admitting to them that this report is not worth the paper that it is written on. It also makes a mockery of the rest of SL&M's Annual Report. Well who knows what is true in this report? Other than the section on Croydon I certainly do not.

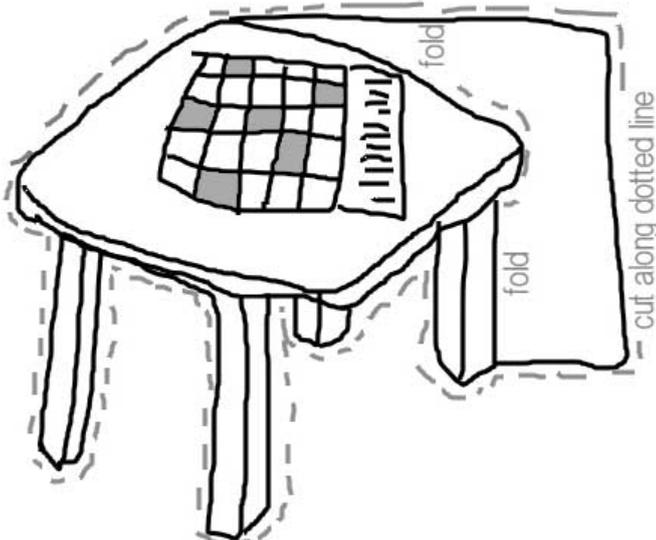
One thing is for certain, and that is as service users gain knowledge of this report it will upset a number of them considerably. I know because I see this daily at Fishers Farm Centre.

This leaves me with two questions for SL&M: What are you going to do to publicly admit to and correct this 'mistake'?

And when are we going to see 'targeted treatment and support' areas 'talking therapies' and so on, finally emerge in Croydon? (Some 14 months from the demise of day care in this borough).

Al Batchelor

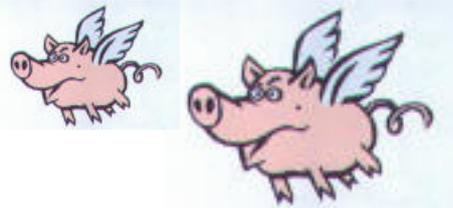
Chair, Fishers Farm Centre





30<sup>th</sup> September 2003

**Stuart Bell**  
Chief Executive



**South London & Maudsley NHS Trust**

Dear Stuart

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2002/03**

We read with incredulity and disappointment, the item in your Annual Report relating to 'improvements' in Croydon day care delivery, which came under the heading '**Getting Help to People When They Need It**'. As you are no doubt now aware, the statement within this item, is fundamentally incorrect. The fact is that day care services in Croydon have deteriorated and **not** in any way improved. The 'centralised hub' at Tamworth Road provides a skeletal range of care to a small number of people rather than the 'wide range' inaccurately reported by yourselves.

#### **Getting help to people when they need it**

■ We improved day care delivery in Croydon to provide targeted treatment and support. The centralised hub of the service at Tamworth Road Resource Centre provides a wide range of care including individual and group 'talking therapies' for anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem, as well as life skills help in areas such as assertiveness and employment. We also have three dedicated treatment centres run by our Community Mental Health Teams.

Steve Hill, Acting Borough Director, was approached about this matter and apologised unreservedly for the error. He explained that he had requested that the item be withdrawn but that this was not done. The error was particularly galling for service users given that they have been repeatedly reporting that their mental health is deteriorating because of the current lack of day care. Our Service User Conference Report substantiates this fact, perhaps you would like to read a copy.

This is not the first time that misinformation regarding services or lack of them, has been placed in the public domain. Last year Croydon Council's Housing and Social Services Cabinet Consultative Panel (27<sup>th</sup> November 2002) made an almost identical error by suggesting that a new model of day care was currently being implemented, again this was completely incorrect because implementation had not yet begun and is (a year on) still far from completion.

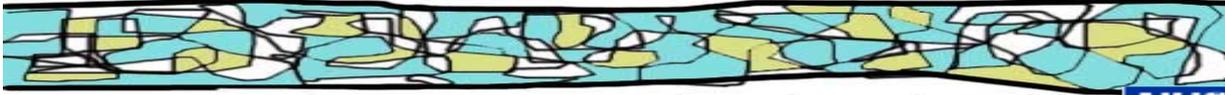
Whilst we appreciate that mistakes can be made, we would like to know how you intend to remedy this mistake and set the record straight. Croydon Service Users feel that the self-congratulatory spin on absent services adds insult to the injury of receiving a decidedly lower quality and quantity of services.

I look forward to your early response.

Yours sincerely

**KEN TAYLOR**

**Acting Co-ordinator, Hear Us User Group**



15<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Dear Ken

Annual Report 2002/03

South London and Maudsley **NHS**  
NHS Trust

Thank you for your letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> September regarding our 2002/03 annual report. I would like to express my sincere apologies for the wording of the section regarding day care provision in Croydon and any distress this has caused.

The annual report is intended to highlight significant achievements during the last financial year and to set out our future service development plans. In the course of compiling the report, Croydon day care was identified as an important and significant area of development. However, given the delays we have experienced in delivering the planned changes to the service, it was clearly incorrect to state that this process is now complete.

I would like to assure you that the publication of this information was the result of a genuine human error rather than a deliberate attempt by the Trust to misrepresent the situation in Croydon. The information was drawn from an earlier report on day care. As you pointed out in your letter, it transpires that changes to the text made by Steve Hill were not incorporated in the final version of the annual report. That is where the mistake occurred.

As a member of the Day Service Steering Group, I know you are familiar with the problems we have experienced in implementing the recommendations from last year's independent review of day care in Croydon. Alongside delivering improvements to local services such as the launch of Home Treatment, I want to assure you that the Trust remains committed to providing effective and therapeutic day care. Any process of change can be a stressful, difficult experience. Given that there are particular anxieties felt by many people in relation to Croydon day care services, I appreciate that the error in our annual report will be particularly sensitive for some people. Please accept my apologies for that and convey them to all concerned.

Obviously, I agree that the mistake needs to be acknowledged and corrected. I would like to propose that we print your letter of complaint in our monthly newsletter, along with an apology and update regarding day care provision. Over 4,000 copies of the newsletter are distributed widely – both internally and to our partner agencies - and it is also published on the Trust website. In the meantime, we have amended the version of the annual report for the Trust website and will ensure that the position is clarified in covering letters sent out with hard copies of the report. As such, I hope you will be satisfied that the correction and apology will reach a sufficiently wide audience. I have also asked Steve Hill to provide you with a revised timetable for the implementation of the day care changes.

*Finally, I'd like to thank you for sending me a copy of the report on your conference in March. I think this is an impressive and interesting document which raises many important issues. I hope that we can continue to work with you to improve the provision of mental health services in Croydon.*

Yours sincerely, **Stuart Bell, Chief Executive**



## Fury over 'Bonkers Bruno' Headline

On the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> September the people of England woke up to enjoy their morning tea + toast breakfast only to realise that sprawled across their morning paper was the headline "Bonkers Bruno in Nuthouse"

As anybody would be they read on only to find that Frank Bruno the Ex-British Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the world was suffering from depression. The aggressive nature of the headline "Bonkers Bruno in Nuthouse" incensed the public, to such an extent that the headline had to be changed before a second release of the paper be made. Thousands upon thousands of phone calls were made to radio stations and indeed early morning television shows, by people complaining that Mr Bruno had not gone bonkers, he was suffering depression and having depression did not mean you were mad.

The basic ignorance of the headline proves that there is still a long way for us to go in conquering the stigma attached to having mental illness.

But as we saw with the general fury of the British public, things can change but only if you ask, because as that classic phrase says if you don't ask you don't get.

Paul Hyde

## 'Bonkers' Headline was Irresponsible



Like many other people, I was extremely disappointed at the recent national newspaper headline which described Frank Bruno as 'Bonkers' following his admission for psychiatric hospital treatment.

This is exactly the kind of insensitive and offensive language which adds to the burden of stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems.

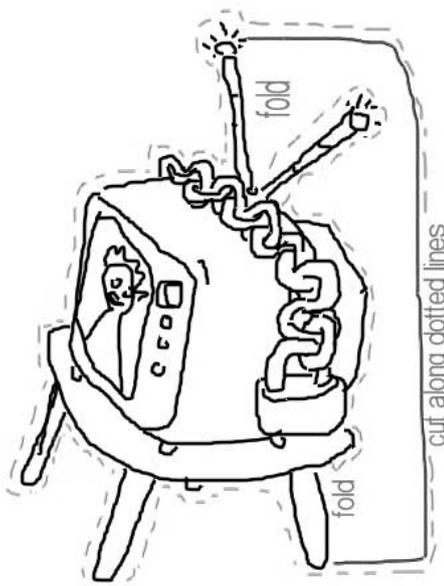
In my role as consultant psychiatrist in Croydon I frequently see people who are ashamed of the fact that they have a mental health problem, who are subjected to verbal and physical abuse because of their illness and who feel marginalised by an uncaring society.

I sincerely hope the widespread anger provoked by the recent newspaper headline will encourage the press and others to reflect upon the potentially damaging impact of this kind of language used in relation to mental health.

The newspaper concerned would do well to learn from the Croydon Advertiser's more responsible and sensitive approach to the issue.

**Professor Graham Thornicroft**

**South London and Maudsley NHS Trust**





## Call for urgent action on drug regulation as second SSRI is withdrawn for under 18s

### **SHOCK AS SECOND SSRI ANTI-DEPRESSANT IS WITHDRAWN FOR UNDER 18s, WHICH LEADS TO CALL FOR URGENT ACTION ON DRUG REGULATION IN THE UK**

For immediate release

This morning the **MHRA** (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) has announced a ban on the prescription of the SSRI anti-depressant **Efexor (Venlafaxine)** to children and adolescents with depression. This is within months of a ban for another SSRI, **Seroxat**, for under 18s, announced in June.

Richard Brook, Mind's Chief Executive said:

"The fact that yet another SSRI has been banned for the treatment of depression in children and adolescents under 18, because it is more harmful than helpful, yet again raises Mind's deepest concerns about the way psychiatric drugs are regulated in the UK. We want to see urgent action to question how drugs are regulated and licensed and how clinical trials are carried out and reported as part of this process."

Another big issue the charity wants to raise with the MHRA is how drugs that are not licensed for use in under 18s get prescribed 'off-licence' to thousands of young people and, more worryingly, how Efexor was still being prescribed last year when it had already been contra-indicated.

With 3,000 children and adolescents prescribed Efexor in the past year, and another 8,000 prescribed Seroxat, Mind is also concerned about what types of treatment will be made available instead of these drugs. Sophie Corlett, Mind's Policy Director said:

"The Government needs to take immediate action to provide other alternative treatments like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which is seriously under-resourced, for the 11,000 children and teenagers who would have been prescribed Seroxat or Efexor. They will be left high, dry and desperate with the only other feasible option being another SSRI.

We are also concerned about the thousands of young people who, from their 18th birthday onwards, can be prescribed these drugs. What difference is there between someone who is 17 and a half years old and a just-turned 18 year old? Surely the risks will be very similar?" said Sophie.

Taken from Mind's website <http://www.mind.org.uk>



ART WORKS IN MENTAL HEALTH™ 

## The 2003 Exhibition

Royal College of Art

Kensington Gore, London SW7

Exhibition opens 31 October – 16  
November 2003

10 am – 6 pm daily, **Closed Sunday 9  
November**

Tel: 01372 462190

E-mail [e.awnh@parkerharris.co.uk](mailto:e.awnh@parkerharris.co.uk)

All works from the exhibition can be seen  
on the Website:

[www.artworksinmentalhealth.co.uk](http://www.artworksinmentalhealth.co.uk)

## This Month's Joke

A man dies and goes to heaven. When he gets to the Pearly Gates he sees thousands of clocks in the clouds. He asks Gabriel 'what are all those clocks for?' Gabriel replies 'They are to show how many lies a person has told during their life. Each time a lie is told the hands move round one degree. That one there is Mother Theresa's, the hands are still in the same place as the day she was born - she's never told a lie. That one is Abraham Lincoln's, it's moved a couple of degrees round - he'd only told a few small lies.' The man looks round at all the clocks and then asks Gabriel 'Where's Tony Blair's clock?' Gabriel replies 'Oh we keep that one in Jesus's office - it makes a great extractor fan!!!!'

**Submitted by G Brown!!!!!!**

## Musicians Wanted

If any musicians are interested in jamming or eventually getting a group together using acoustic instruments i.e. guitar, vocals etc.

Please contact Jeremy Dodds on **020 8684 3481**. We have the opportunity to use the basement at Hear Us at South Norwood for a get together and rehearsal.



## Dear Reader

A group of student social workers from Goldsmiths College have approached us for help to complete a project on Mental Health Crisis Services. The students are trying to gain an understanding of the following: -

1. To identify service user opinions about crisis services.
2. To gain a perspective from different boroughs/voluntary organisations/professionals in providing crisis services.
3. How effective is anti-discriminatory practice in the provision of crisis services?

To explore the concept of social need.

This group is in the process of formulating interview questions and plan to run focus groups in the near future.

If you are interested please contact Fiona Brew c/o Hear Us.



### National Voices Forum, Martha Robinson, Poetry Competition 2003

Prizes 1<sup>st</sup> - £100 2<sup>nd</sup> £50 3<sup>rd</sup> £25

**Voices is holding a poetry competition** open to all mental health ex/service users in the UK, following on from the ones held for the last two years. The three winning poems will be published in "Perceptions" magazine and also on our website [www.voicesforum.org.uk](http://www.voicesforum.org.uk). There will be commendations and all poems will be considered for publication. The competition is funded by money bequeathed to us for this purpose by Martha Robinson several years ago. Martha's Son had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, having previously won a scholarship to Oxford. He died tragically aged only 38. After this Martha, an author, became involved with NSF (now Rethink) and through their newsletter collected poems by service users and published an anthology. Following on from the success of this, a second was published and she went on to organise an international poetry competition. She saw the poems as a way of educating the public about the reality of what is called schizophrenia.

Rules of the competition, The competition will be judged by a panel of five judges who have been chosen by delegation of National Voices Business Meeting. The rules of the competition are as follows:

The competition is open to ex/service users only. Only unpublished material will be accepted. Entrants must be UK residents. Entries must be LEGIBLE. There must be only one entry per person. Entries must not exceed one side of A4. The title of the poem must be at the top of the page. The entrant's name must not appear on the poem. (This is in order to preserve anonymity for the judges) Entries must be accompanied by an entry form. The judges' decision is final.

Please send the form below with your entry to: Nina Rideout, Poetry Competition, 28 Castle Street, Kingston, Surrey. KT1 1SS. All Entries must arrive by Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003, entrants will be informed of the judging in January 2004.

<b>MARTHA ROBINSON POETRY COMPETITION 2003 ENTRY FORM</b>	
<b>NAME</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>	
<b>TELEPHONE</b>	
TITLE OF POEM	
<b>NAME OF VOICES GROUP</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>	
SIGNATURE	DATE
<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	<b>ENTRY NUMBER:</b>



## Women's Drop In/Support Group

Sue Albery - APCMH

We will be starting a women's drop-in/support group at Norbury, the same venue as the Open Door. It is a joint venture with the Methodist Church but is not 'religious'. It will be facilitated by Hazel Radcliffe who is the minister at Norbury and myself and volunteers all of whom will be women. It will be open to any women to attend when and if they wish and for all or part of the time just as our other drop ins. Anybody who wants to know more can ring me and women who feel they would like to volunteer should also get in touch with me. We expect to open at the end of November and it will be held on a Friday afternoon from 2.30 to 4.30 pm. Look out for the fliers, out soon.

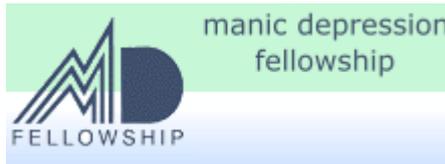
*Hear Us has been invited to offer a service user perspective on 'Confidentiality in Psychiatric Practice' at the forthcoming Croydon Research Forum on 1st December 2003, if you would like to contribute your views on the day, please contact Ken Taylor at Hear Us for an informal discussion. If you wish to attend the event, please complete the enclosed Registration Form. Details of the day are listed below.*

### Third Croydon Research Forum December 1<sup>st</sup> 2003

#### "The Art and Science of Psychiatry"

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Venue:        | Hilton, Croydon  |
| Chair:        | Dr Sophia Frangou, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, IOP  |
| 9.15 – 10.30  | <p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What has biological research taught us about mental illness?<br/>Sophia Frangou, Psychiatry, IOP</li> <li>2. Meaning and Mental Disorder<br/>Professor Derek Bolton, Psychology, IOP</li> </ol>  |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. New advances in antipsychotic treatment.<br/>Professor Rob Kerwin, Psychopharmacology, IOP</li> <li>4. New approaches to the treatment of 'voices'.<br/>Sukhwinder Shergill, IOP</li> </ol>  |
| 12.00 – 1.00  | Poster Session and Buffet Lunch  |
| 14.00 – 16.00 | <p>Parallel Workshops</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Assessing and treating personality disorders<br/>Dr Maria Isaac, Consultant Psychiatrist, CAMHS</li> <li>2) Managing First Episode Psychosis<br/>Dr Kathy Aitchison, Senior Lecturer, IOP</li> <li>3) Confidentiality in Psychiatric Practice<br/>Project Leader, F. Holloway, Clinical Director, SlaM</li> <li>4) Industry Sponsored Workshop: TBC</li> </ol> |

***Works of Art by users of Croydon Services will be on display throughout the meeting.***



Next Meeting: **November 6<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm** for start at **7pm**  
**Venue: The Community Room, at the Hawthorn Centre, Penge.** We invite you to our monthly meeting. Come and join us at our self-help group to support users, families and friends.

## NEWS

Six people managed to come to our last meeting in Oct, including one new interested person who was introduced by a longstanding member.

Apologies for misprint of **MDF website** address. Here it is again: [www.mdf.org.uk](http://www.mdf.org.uk)

It is urgent that we consider ideas as to how we could use funding of up to £1.000 if we are to apply for a **community grant**. We have been offered a room to meet in **Anerley by BUG. It is at 65, Anerley Hill opposite Hamlet Rd.** We would stick to meeting on Thursdays pm if we decide to move. So one way of using the funding would be advertising the new location. We could also have a blitz on attracting some new members. One way suggested so far is to mail all the GPs in the five boroughs surrounding Crystal Palace. I would welcome any other ideas you have on what we need.

**November is fireworks time.** For those interested in going to watch: Brockwell Park has a free show on Nov 5<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm in Herne Hill, Lambeth. Blackheath's display which is more spectacular is on Sat 8<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. If you want to go along with Jenny, please ring her (number below), after Nov 1<sup>st</sup>

**5. MDF's regional network meeting** for self help groups in Greater London area will be on Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Nov at Chiswick Town Hall, starting at 11am. Millie, Laurence and Jenny are planning to go. If anyone else would like to go please phone Jenny.

Contact numbers, **Jenny 020 8653 8497, Millie 020 8771 4493**

## FORTHCOMING ART EXHIBITION

March/April/May

We would like to draw your attention to our forthcoming Art Exhibition based on creative exploration by the Mental Health community, working, living and cared for in Croydon.

The multi-media exhibition is being planned to show people's journey through their lives from the perspective of Mental Health, to education the public by presenting a more positive understanding of a minority group and to highlight the underlying emotional and spiritual dimension of valued people living with mental illness.

Mental Health is only one aspect of human existence; we need to look beyond the obvious and the negative. The intention is to break down the stigma surrounding Mental Health.

As part of our creative campaign we would like your participation, If you have any suggestions or ways of contributing towards our exhibition named '**Denial and Acceptance**' please do not hesitate to contact us on the following email address: [caroletano@hotmail.com](mailto:caroletano@hotmail.com).



We would appreciate contributions towards this exhibition in the following ways: -

- Financial Support
- Advertising
- Workshops
- Volunteers
- Arts Works

The Exhibition is planned for either March/April, or April/May (yet to be confirmed) 2004 and will be held in Croydon Clock tower.

Terence Wilde and Carole Tano 020 86535199



## MIND SEEKS FEEDBACK ON COMING OFF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS FOR GROUNDBREAKING NEW SURVEY

Mind today launches a new project 'Coping with Coming Off', which will explore people's experience of withdrawing from psychiatric drugs. Many people who have been prescribed psychiatric drugs such as antidepressants, sleeping pills or major tranquillisers, but no longer need or want them can find it very difficult to come off. The charity is looking for people who have come off or tried to come off psychiatric drugs who are willing to take part in the study (\*1).

The project will aim to improve understanding of what makes withdrawal more or less likely to be successful, so that Mind can provide information to individuals who are stopping taking a drug and to the health care practitioners supporting them. It also aims to inform and influence the provision of support services and the training of health professionals.

Several psychiatric drugs have come under the media spotlight recently. Earlier this year two SSRI antidepressants were withdrawn for use on under-18s because of concerns about side effects and withdrawal (\*2). A Panorama/Mind survey of people who emailed the BBC programme after a broadcast about the antidepressant Seroxat, found that 91% of people who responded and who had taken Seroxat had tried to stop taking the drug, mostly because of unwanted side effects and 83% of those people experienced withdrawal problems (\*3).

Speaking today project co-ordinator Alison Cobb said: "Withdrawal effects from psychiatric drugs can be very distressing and frightening. People should not be left to handle it on their own, but get the information and support they need. Mind hopes that this survey will better our understanding of the process of withdrawing and improve the process for everyone involved."

**If you have personal experience of coming off or trying to come off any psychiatric drugs, and you would like to be interviewed for this new project please print a questionnaire from Mind's web site at [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) or contact the PPU Administrator at Mind, 15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ for copies.**

(\*1) Psychiatric drugs include antidepressants, minor tranquillisers and sleeping pills, major tranquillisers such as Largactil, Depixol, Clozaril or Risperidone, and mood stabilisers such as lithium or carbamazepine.

(\*2) The MHRA has banned the prescription of SSRI anti-depressants Seroxat and Efexor to children and adolescents under 18 with depression

(\*3) Panorama/Mind Yellow Card Survey 2003.

### **Submit something to the Hear Us Newsletter**

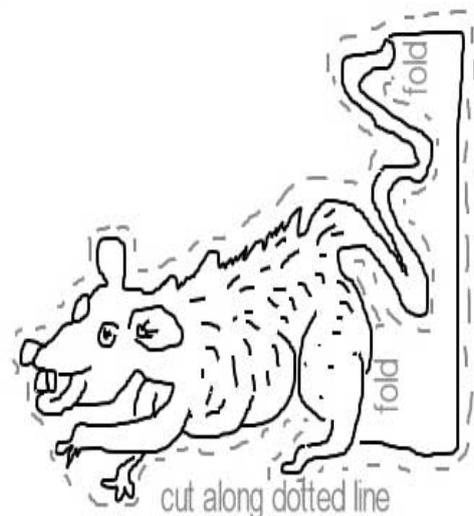
Would you like to contribute something to the Hear Us Newsletter? A letter an article, a poem or an image? Something happy, sad, serious or even bad?

The Hear Us User Group welcome opinion on any subject, such as the stigma of mental illness or indeed any subject connected to mental illness. All letters are answered and will be considered for our Newsletter.

**Write to: Hear Us, 24 High Street, South Norwood, London, SE25 6EZ.**

**Or email [ken@hear-us.org](mailto:ken@hear-us.org) or Tel: 020 8653 6045**

*We reserve the right to edit submissions as*





### Interested in training ASW students

The South London Approved Social Worker Training Consortium is looking for a service user/survivor to take part in training and assessing ASW students. The current trainer is hanging up her clipboard and chucking away her trusty marking pen in the New Year. Training will start at the Maudsley Hospital in March 2004. The successful candidate will shadow the current trainer for two to three months. You won't be thrown in at the deep end.

#### Person spec

Past or present user of mental health services. Must have spent at least one day as an inpatient. Knowledge of Mental Health act is not necessary, full training and support will be given.

#### Commitment.

Four to Eight days per course, two 6 month courses a year.

#### What you have to do

You will attend the first day of the course, evaluate student presentations (one day per course), and present one lecture per term and various teaching spots.

Pay, £ 20 per morning/ £40 per day whilst shadowing current trainer. £120 for the first day of term, £75 per teaching spot/ evaluating presentations and £300 for assessing presentations.

If you are interested please contact Hear Us and we will forward your details to the training organiser.

**Hear Us**  
**24 High Street, London, SE25 6EZ**  
**0208 653 6045**  
**Email: Ken@hear-us.org**  
**www.hear-us.org**

### Hear Us Membership Application Form

Membership Criteria: ( Please fill in and return to Hear Us)

RESIDENT IN LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

HAVE A RECOGNISABLE INTEREST IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USER ISSUES IN CROYDON

HAVE HAD AN EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OR SOME FORM OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnic

Origin:

Which resource centre if any do you use?

I would like to become a member of Hear Us, and to receive your free newsletter. Hear Us will not use the information you provide for anything other than distribution of newsletter and invitations to meetings.

I agree to the group's rules.

Please read form thoroughly and check that the information you have provided is correct before signing.

Sign Here



## SERVICE USER INVOLVMENT IN PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

Hear Us has received an invitation from Dr Caron Gaw, manager of Croydon Psychology Services to discuss user involvement in psychology services. Along with user involvement a number of areas of interest spring to mind such as the length of waiting lists, which talking therapies are available and how people make informed choices about what is available.

If you are interested in attending the meeting or you would like your thoughts on any of the above to be discussed, please contact Ken Taylor at the Hear Us office.

The meeting takes place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November between 10 – 11 at:

Lennard Lodge, 2 Lennard Road Croydon.

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## YOU AND I

*I* am a resident

*You* reside

*I* am admitted

*You* move in

*I* am aggressive

*You* are assertive

*I* have behaviour problems

*You* are rude

*I* am non-compliant

*You* don't like being told what to do

When I ask you out to dinner, it is an outing. **When you ask someone out, it is a date.**

I don't know how many people have read the progress notes people write about me.

I don't even know what is in there. **You didn't speak to your best friend for a month after she read your diary.**

I make mistakes during my numeracy or literacy class. Some day I might even get a bank account.

**You forgot to record some withdrawals from your account. The bank called to remind you.**

I wanted to talk to the nice-looking person behind us at the supermarket. I was told it was inappropriate to talk to strangers. **You met your spouse in the produce department. You couldn't find the bean sprouts.**

I celebrated my birthday yesterday with five other residents and two staff members. I hope my family sends a card. **Your family threw a surprise party. It sounded wonderful.**

My case manager sends a report every month to my guardian. It contains everything I did wrong and some things I got right. **You are still cross with your sister for ringing your mother after you got a speeding ticket.**

After I do my budget tonight I might go to Macdonalds if I have enough money. **You were glad the new French restaurant took your charge card.**

My case manager, psychologist, occupational therapies, nutritionist and house staff set goals for me for next year. **You haven't decided what you want out of life.**

Some day I will be discharged.....maybe. **You will move onward and upward.**

***An anonymous poem given to a member of Values in Action on a visit to the USA.***

***Thanks to Sue Albury for bringing our attention to this moving and thought provoking poem***



## CLEANING PROBLEMS 2

By Ms Daemon



Unfortunately, my shrink doesn't know of any drug that will cure my inability – the kitchen-floor problem. So, as he's the pills-man only, he send me to a talk therapies – how kind. Actually, she's a very nice lady. She tells me all about CBT while I nod politely (I'm always polite to these people – they seem to thrive on it).

"It's a very practical therapy", she says. I perk up a bit at this, but instantly an irresistible image flashes in of my dirty kitchen floor and I quickly subside again.

"The task", she says firmly, "is do-able!" I stare at her in mute astonishment. *Task?! This is a War situation!* How can I explain? I ask her "How often do you clean *your* floor?" She wiggles a bit uncomfortably, but bravely accepts the gambit. "Well, actually, I pay someone", she says.

"Ah". We stare at one another across the great divide between those on benefits and those with a salary.

"Of course, even if we could arrange for someone to clean it, that's not really the point is it?" she adds, smiling in an enabling way.

What can I say? It's an eternal war I've already lost, I decide. Look what happens! I dare to confront the memory of washing the kitchen floor (yes, I do have one!). I hastily skip over the actual washing of it – that's too painful and horrific. Instead I fast-forward to the part where I'm standing at the door, looking at the perfection of a clean fragrant floor. I must admit to a good feeling here – reward time! But the memory reels relentlessly on. Ten minutes later the floor is tarnished. By a splash of spilt tea, or a defrosted chip that looks remarkably like a worm, or a sad wilted piece of lettuce...At first I'll deal with these as they come, but gradually defeat will set in, and once again I'll sweep in a desultory way while the dirt accumulates.

"The war is over", I inform her. "Sending in the cavalry wouldn't help in the long run. I'm better at living with a dirty floor than I am with a clean one".

"But what about the hygiene?" she cries. "It's dangerous to your health!" Well, I figure that the floor's a long way down from where I'm looking, and only my feet have to touch it.

"Tell you what", I reply "I promise never to eat off it!" But she has the last laugh. "Homework!" she says. I look at her with dread. "Clean the kitchen floor!"

Article taken from Southwark Mind Newsletter  
September 2003





**WHEN?**

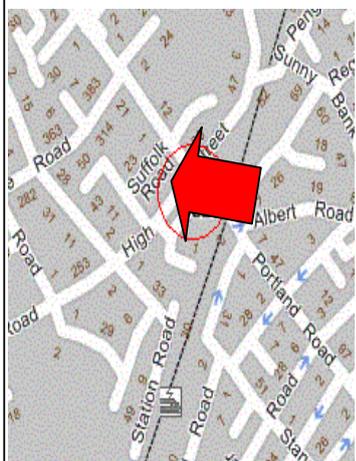
Every Tuesday  
Evening  
5 pm until 8 pm

**WHERE?**

Hear Us  
24 High Street  
SOUTH NORWOOD  
SE25 6EZ

**HOW DO I GET THERE?**

**BUS**  
157, 410 OR 75  
**RAIL**  
Norwood Junction  
**TRAM**  
Harrington Road



**NEW  
IN  
CROYDON**

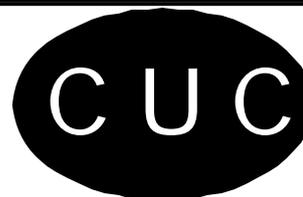
Hear Us

**SOCIAL CLUB**

For people who have experienced  
mental health problems and or  
used mental health services

*WE AIM TO PROVIDE a*

- *Safe*
- *Supportive*
- *Friendly*
- *Place To Go*



**CROYDON  
USER  
COUNCIL**

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

  
020 8653 6045  
Email  
ken@hear-us.org  
WWW  
www.hear-us.org

**COME ALONG AND MEET  
PEOPLE, HAVE A CHAT, SHARE  
YOUR TROUBLES, EAT, GET  
INFORMATION  
HAVE A LAUGH**

