



Phoenix

Newsletter of The Central Lancashire ME/CFS Support Group

Patron: Doctor J Roberts

Charity no. 1106333

April 2014 issue The upcoming AGM-IMPORTANT!



This newsletter is being sent out a little later than we planned. It is also shorter because we are sending all members information about the AGM which will take place on June 4th at Bamber Bridge, and membership renewal which is also due in June.

Please do attend if you are able as we would love to see you all and we will be needing some new blood on the Committee as two of our long standing members are retiring. Many thanks go to Viv Henderson (and Roland) and Pat Iddon for all their hard work. We would love to add to the fun element of committee life! At the AGM we will also have a talk by Dr Lisa Riste from the METRIC Project, see AGM notice enclosed.

So... to be clear... PLEASE!... if you are reading this, thinking that you have a few hours spare occasionally... or if you *might* have some time free, but are a little worried about what may be involved... then give the office a call, or email us for a chat. Equally... if you have a family member who you believe may be able to help... please contact us!

The more people that “step forward” the better, as that would share out any tasks between more people... meaning less pressure on everyone involved. Anyone who comes forward, will only be asked to do what they are physically and mentally able (and willing) to do.

M.E. Awareness Week - Sun 11th May to Sat 17th May

It is almost the start of National M.E. Awareness Week. We will be having a table at Galloway's Table Top Sale (Penwortham) to raise funds and awareness for Galloway's, ourselves and others, Sat May 10th 10am-3pm. Come and visit or if you could help for an hour, contact the office.

If you want to look at what is happening round the UK during Awareness Week, you might like to take a look at the Action for M.E. website at - <http://www.actionforme.org.uk/> or the M.E Association's website at <http://www.meassociation.org.uk/>

“Healthwatch Lancashire” - spotlight on local services

“Our Vision.... Healthwatch Lancashire strives to be a powerful public voice ensuring the best health and social care for the people of Lancashire.

Our mission.... An independent organisation, we will enable the people of Lancashire to influence, change and improve the quality of local health and social care services.”

For more information contact: Tel: 0300 303 8811

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

email: info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk



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Disclaimer The views represented in this Newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the committee. Therapies, treatments, techniques etc, are described for information only, inclusion in this Newsletter should not be taken as a recommendation. All items are for information only.

“Creative Expression”

For those of you with these abilities, and if you use the internet, you may have come across *MEspace!* If not it's ... “A place where people from around the world who have ME/CFS can come together and produce artwork, written material, songs, instrumental pieces and videos, and make friends.”

“Art (creativity) has a soothing energy that can help alleviate symptoms. The creative process allows the mind to focus on something positive.”

www.mespace.org email: info@mespace.org

Free Learning Opportunities

Disability Equality NW are offering FREE adult learning sessions via their “Strengthening our Community” course. The two lessons that are still available are: **10th July** - IT/computing **17th July** - CV/letter writing

Contact Des Butler at Disability Equality NW on 01772 558863, or visit them at 103 Church Street Preston. PR1 3BS.

National News

A government minister has apologised after it emerged that a Whitehall department sent letters to a woman demanding she make an effort to find work even though she was in a coma. The minister for disabled people, Mike Penning, said he apologised “unreservedly” to the family of Sheila Holt after he was challenged in the Commons.

“It's about time politicians did stand up and apologise when things went wrong. It clearly has gone wrong and the family have every right to be aggrieved and I hope she makes a full recovery, as much as she can,” said Penning.

Holt, who has suffered from physical and mental health problems, was contacted by the Department for Work and Pensions, which invited her to attend “intensive job-focused activity”, according to her MP Simon Danczuk. She fell into a coma in December last year and the government and its contractor were informed, the Labour MP told the Commons.

Reproduced with kind permission of The Guardian Newspaper 28th February 2014 Original interview given to Kevin Rawlinson. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/feb/28/minister-apologise-woman-coma-find-work>)

IT company Atos has confirmed it is seeking to end its government contract to assess whether benefits claimants are fit to work. Staff carrying out work capability assessments for Atos have received death threats online and in person, according to the Financial Times.

In a statement, Atos pledged to carry on undertaking the tests until a new company was in a position to take over. But the government said that standards at Atos had declined unacceptably. Disability campaigners have described the work tests as “ridiculously harsh and extremely unfair”. The Financial Times reported that Atos recorded about 163 incidents of abuse or assault on staff each month last year.

The chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Anne Begg, said that there was a “real problem” with Atos’ £500m contract, as it did not suffer any penalties for failing to deliver. Ms Begg added that Atos had “become the lightning rod for hatred and upset.” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26287199>

Carers’ Contacts

Carers Lancashire: 0345 6887113 Ring this number and you will be put through to the Carers’ organisation covering **your area**.

Blackpool Carers’ Centre: 01253 393748 info@blackpoolcarerscentre.co.uk