

Features & Comment

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It is vital to make poor mental health something that can be talked about openly so that young people don't feel as though they have to battle it alone.

Donna Hackleton, of the Fia Not campaign.



A TOXIC MIX FOR YOUNG MINDS

LIKE MANY schools Minsthorpe Community College is seeing more young people with mental health issues. It is not surprising, says principal Ray Henshaw, describing the world today as “scary” for young people.

They face high expectations with schoolwork and friendships, he says, with some confronted with financial difficulties, family breakdowns, homelessness and emotional neglect and many worrying about terrorism, Brexit and how they compare academically and socially with peers. “Many fear crime, domestic violence and look on a world in which they feel vulnerable and at risk while at the same time feeling under pressure to appear happy and cool in the face of an almost 24/7 scrutiny of their lives by friends and peers via social media,” he says, adding that the pressures are a “modern, toxic mix”.

“With all this at stake, essential local authority mental health services for children and young people are being cut... More effective signposting from schools is a good thing, but there are fewer services to signpost children to.”

“Local authorities have been virtually wiped out and can no longer provide the mental health support services that young people need. Schools can barely afford to put teachers in front of students let alone stretch their already crippled budgets to pay for these services.”

The school in South Elmsall, near Wakefield, is part of the district's Future in Mind programme, which promotes good emotional wellbeing and mental health for young people. A trained Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) practitioner spends time on site, giving guidance to staff and raising awareness amongst parents and students about issues and wellbeing strategies.



‘Young people and mental health in a changing world’ is the theme of today's World Mental Health Day. Laura Drysdale explores some of the challenges being faced.

Across the region, in North Yorkshire, Compass BUZZ, a mental health and wellbeing project, has been training school professionals to support the mental health of young people since its launch last September.

Its latest figures show 94 per cent of schools have completed at least the first level of training offered through the scheme, which in January also launched a confidential text message service for children aged 11 to 18 to express mental health and wellbeing concerns. Part of the project's focus is on prevention, early help and reducing stigma, says Emma Tymon, team leader. “If a young person has a mental health condition that comes out early in life, the support needs to be there to make sure it doesn't escalate further than it needs to.”

‘Young People and Mental Health in

a Changing World’, has been chosen as the theme of today's World Mental Health Day. The World Federation for Mental Health wants to put the spotlight on issues today's youth and young adults are facing and begin conversation around what they need to grow up “healthy, happy and resilient”.

At the Time Out Project, run by mental health charity Healthy Minds in Calderdale, early intervention and building resilience is at the core, says team leader Tara Guha. The scheme helps all young people aged 10 to 19, not just those with mental health concerns, to access a range of local activities. It also offers workshops around issues including self-harm and body image and delivers sessions in schools to raise students' awareness of mental health, self-care and getting support.

“The project has been shaped by young people themselves, who told us that getting out of the house, meeting people and doing something they enjoy is likely to help them ‘feel good and stay well’”, Tara explains.

Kiah Hamilton-Adams, aged 19, began volunteering with Healthy Minds last year, with part of her role involving going into schools to tell her story.

Aged 12, her self-esteem hit rock bottom and she began starving herself, eating less and less to try to make herself feel better, before later turning to ‘boys and dating’. At 17, Huddersfield-born Kiah attended counselling, around two years after she began campaigning for better mental health services for young people as a member of a youth council in her mid-teens. “It made me feel better about myself and brought out my self-confidence,” she explains. “I stopped having to find unhealthy methods with coping with the way I felt, about myself”

At age 22, Rebecca Robinson, a young person living in Leeds, who took

seven years to reach out for help after starting to experience mental health problems at the age of 13, says it is only now that she is learning healthy coping strategies to manage stress and potential crisis. “If this is taught from a young age, then it could potentially reduce the risk of developing stress-related mental health conditions in the future,” she says.

This year has seen no shortage of reports on the mental health of the country's young people, with many highlighting a need for change.

Charity YoungMinds says it is fighting for a new era for young people's mental health, where help is available to every young person who reaches out. It is a “critical time” to ensure more money is put into the children's mental health system, Tom Madders, director of campaigns says, and to address a “black hole” in community mental health support, “so that every young person has a place to go to feel safe, work through their problems and learn strategies to start to feel better”.

“What we need locally and nationally



CHALLENGING: Ray Henshaw of Minsthorpe Community College says it is a ‘scary’ world for young people. Main image, Donna Hackleton. MAIN PICTURE: JOHN CLIFTON.

Global mental health summit

A SPOKESPERSON for the Department for Health and Social Care said it was “transforming” mental health services for children and young people in England with an extra £1.4bn.

“We are on track to ensure that 70,000 more children a year have access to specialist mental health care by 2020/21. We are improving access to mental health services through schools with a brand new dedicated workforce and piloting a four week waiting time standard in some areas.”

Meanwhile, the first Global Ministerial Mental Health summit is underway in London involving political figures, experts and policy makers around the world coming together with the focus of better mental health for all.

is strengthened links between schools, GPs and mental health services, in order to improve prevention and early support,” says David Smith, chief executive of the Hull and East Yorkshire branch of mental health charity Mind. The number of children and young people turning to the organisation for help is increasing every year, he says, many facing challenges around exams, relationships and social media.

Phil Eve, aged 30, has volunteered with the charity for two-and-a-half years, including with its young people's project peer support group for 13 to 18-year-olds. He experienced depression, low mood and anxiety from his early teens, going on to seek help aged 21.

It is important to reassure young people that the “expectations of the real world aren't as high as they think they are”, he says. “They need to be reassured that there are many people experiencing poor mental health and that they aren't alone and there are organisations willing to help.”

“It is vital to make poor mental health something that can be talked about openly so that young people don't feel as though they have to battle it alone”, Donna Hackleton, of the Fia Not campaign, agrees. The Wakefield-based organisation, set up in memory of Sophia Theobald, an aspiring mental health nurse who took her own life, aims to open a safe house for people in mental health crisis.

“Education is the key,” Donna says. “In schools and work alike, teachers and employers need to know how to handle mental health and point people in the right direction to get help, as well as offering ways to improve self-worth and confidence.”

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‘Lost words’ of nature will reappear at primary schools

AN ORGANIC campaign that became a natural phenomenon has resulted in hundreds of primary schools across Yorkshire – along with libraries and GP surgeries – receiving copies of books celebrating disappearing words of nature that have been cut from junior dictionaries.

From ‘otter’ to ‘kingfisher’, ‘dandelion’ to ‘bramble’, *The Lost Words* featuring ‘spell-poems’ by author Robert Macfarlane and illustrations by artist Jackie Morris is to reach audiences of children in North and East Yorkshire, York, Hull, Sheffield and Bradford thanks to a series of successful fundraising campaigns.

The different campaigns in Yorkshire were all inspired by the success of Stirling-based school bus driver Jane Beaton, who was moved to start raising £25,000 to buy enough copies of the book to get a copy into every school in Scotland.

Hundreds of primary schools across Yorkshire are receiving copies of a book celebrating the ‘lost words’ of nature following a grassroots campaign. Chris Burn reports.

The book, which was published last October and has been named as a joint winner of the Children's Book of the Year prize at The British Book Awards 2018, came about after a group of prominent authors including Margaret Atwood and Andrew Motion protested in 2015 at the “shocking and poorly considered” removal of dozens of words associated with the natural world from the Oxford Junior Dictionary, which limits itself to 10,000

words per edition and is aimed at seven-year-olds.

Out went ‘cauliflower’, ‘chestnut’ and ‘clover’; replaced by more modern phrases like ‘cut and paste’, ‘broadband’ and ‘blog’. By last December, more than 50,000 people had signed a petition calling for the reinstatement of words like ‘otter’ but publisher Oxford University Press said its ‘relevant and beneficial’ dictionary still included about 400 words focusing on the natural world.

Morris and Macfarlane were among the authors involved in the 2015 protest and the pair, who had never previously met, decided to work together to create a unique book aiming to capture the beauty and wonder of the natural world.

Following Beaton's success, similar fundraising initiatives sprung up across the country, including in Yorkshire. Nature writer Amy-Jane Beer, who

has helped to coordinate efforts in the region, says: “North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire, York and Hull raised £9,000 though crowdfunding and grants in July to buy books for 558 primary schools and about 200 GP surgery waiting rooms. We have now begun distribution with the help of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Ryedale Book Festival, North York Moors National Park and Ready Steady Read, and Waterstones Hull, York and Harrogate. Responses from schools and teachers have been fabulous.”

On Saturday, school representatives in the Harrogate, Knaresborough and Nidderdale areas will be able to collect a copy of the book from Harrogate Waterstones between 11am and 1pm.

In Bradford, French teacher Vicky Cooke has secured enough money to get the book into all 173 primary schools in the city and surrounding areas. She has personally delivered

some books to schools in Bingley already.

In Sheffield, Joanna Dobson, who works in English language assessment, coordinated efforts to raise £3,520, which has paid for 152 copies for Sheffield primary schools and 28 copies for public libraries, as well as four copies for dementia charities.

The first copies of the books were handed out to primary schools at the recent Sheffield Street Tree Festival. The event was attended by author Robert Macfarlane, where he launched *Heartwood*, a new spell-song composed especially for Sheffield, a ‘charm against harm for all trees everywhere threatened with unjust felling’ linked to the ongoing campaign against the removal of street trees in the city.

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NATURAL SUCCESS: The Lost Words co-author Robert Macfarlane visits the Sheffield Street Tree Festival.



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WELL DONE: Reader Janina Dolny took this pic of St Bernard's Well on the Water of Leith from Dean Gardens during Doors Open Day

Platform ALISON DICKIE

Let's talk about better mental health

TODAY is World Mental Health Day and supporting young people's mental health was firmly on the agenda of the council's education, children and families committee yesterday, starting with talk.

Talking is good and we must get into the habit of talking about our mental health from an early stage – and in a stigma free-way.

Since my election last year, I've been pushing on work to ensure that every young person across our schools is better supported to talk about their mental health at their point of need. That's the vital bit, at their point of need, before it becomes a crisis.

Sometimes, we complicate the mental health support required for many and rely too heavily on the professionals, when research points to the power of simple, preventative solutions like talking and trusted relationships. It's a policy area I'm passionate about for personal and professional reasons.

If you think mental health stigma is bad now, jings, it came with a



capital S back in my schooldays. Mental health just wasn't something that you talked about – and I needed to talk.

Let's just say, the first 16 years of my life were tough, and I remember the loneliness of wandering the school corridors like Harry Potter in his invisibility cloak, but with less of the magic, and with no one to talk to about how life at home was making me feel.

Not talking took its toll. By 17, I'd developed anxiety and depression, and left school without the qualifications I now believe I had the potential to achieve. Degrees and careers later followed but periodic

anxiety plagued those interim years. Roll forward to my previous teaching career, and those same invisible young people passed through my classrooms, and angry ones too. I recall one boy, his eyes glazed over from events I knew he'd witnessed the night before, learning about regular and irregular polygons in maths!

That was his point of need, the point he needed to talk, and for longer than the moments I could give him during a busy school day.

Today, there's a greater understanding of how mental health relates to learning, and health and wellbeing is increasingly embedded across our curriculum. There are resources and training to building resilience and inform practice, new Pupil Support Officers with a remit for emotional health, school nurses who will soon deliver low-intensity cognitive behavioural therapy, and a commitment of secondary school counselling services from the Scottish Government.

But, this week's committee report encourages a whole school approach to talking at the point of need.

A communication will shortly go out to all of our schools in the city, encouraging them to work with their young people and all staff to shape a self-referral system that fits with their school. It could include identifying trusted adults and space, mental health training, signposting, peer mentoring, partnerships, digital support and more.

Next year, we'll hold a Mental Health Conference where young people will lead in the showcasing of best practice, and produce a "Top Tips" signposting resource to support young people with their mental health . . . and talking at their point of need.

■ *Cllr Alison Dickie is vice convener of education, children and families at Edinburgh City Council*

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Speed cut would be a token gesture

WHEN the idea of a 20mph speed limit was first mooted a couple of weeks ago we expressed our doubts.

No one would disagree with anything that puts the brakes on the dangerous drivers who treat the city as their own personal Brands Hatch - but lowering the speed limit won't do that.

If someone ignores a sign telling them to drive at 30mph you can bet they will thumb their noses at a 20mph restriction.

The only people caught out by a 20mph zone will be otherwise law-abiding motorists confused by the change.

West Yorkshire Police do not have the resources to enforce a city centre reduction in speed limits.

We fear many drivers would simply ignore the signs and set their own limits, banking on the fact that they almost certainly won't be caught.

That's why Manchester has called a halt to its 20mph plans after finding they made no difference to average speeds or accidents.

If the local authority has money to speed on speed mitigation measures then we think a more targeted approach - perhaps outside the city's schools or at key accident blackspots - would be a more effective use of those resources.

Speed bumps and artificial pinch points could be useful in making drivers slow down near schools and colleges.

Any law is only as good as society's ability to enforce it. Slashing speed limits in the city centre would be a token gesture, at best, and a waste of money at worst.

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ON THIS DAY

25 years ago: A revolutionary scheme where people could trade their skills rather than pay cash had been launched in Bradford. Named the Local Exchange Transaction Scheme, people could use their skills ranging from babysitting to bricklaying to gain credit, instead of using pounds and pence.

50 years ago: Bradford Council Municipal Undertakings Committee had proposed the purchase of 90 new motor buses over the next three years to coincide with the approach of the end of the trolley buses in Bradford.

TACKLING STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH

World Mental Health Day puts the focus on the support services available locally

TODAY organisations and individuals across the district will be marking World Mental Health Day.

Aimed at educating, raising awareness and tackling social stigma, it was created by the World Federation for Mental Health in 1992.

It also marks the 20th anniversary of Mind in Bradford's confidential telephone helpline Guide-Line. The advice service was set up as a pilot by the local mental health charity in 1998, with just one worker answering calls six hours a day, five days a week.

Now the helpline operates from 12 noon until 9pm every day of the year and is manned by a team of 15 trained staff and volunteers across the district. In the past six months alone, they have provided support to 4,601 callers.

Statistics show that one in four of us will experience a mental health problem, ranging from depression and anxiety to rarer conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

And often people do not know where to get help or worry about the stigma.

"Even now we get callers who didn't know about our service. They thought there was no help in Bradford," said Guide-Line worker Jeanette.

"But all calls are confidential and we can help and support people, and we can signpost them to sessions at Mind in Bradford or to other organisations."

She added that many callers seek help because this is a phonenumber service. "A lot of people don't like face-to-face contact at first. Sometimes we are people's only support if they struggle to get out of the house because of agoraphobia, for example."



SUPPORT: World Mental Health Day is aimed at educating, raising awareness and tackling social stigma



HELP: Helen Davey, Mind in Bradford chief executive

This year, World Mental Health Day is highlighting growing concerns for the mental well-being of young people, who are reporting increased incidents of depression, stress and self-harm. The pressures of schoolwork, exams and social media are often blamed with one in ten children in a classroom now having a diagnosable mental health disorder.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics show that in 2015, suicide was the most common cause of death for both

boys (17per cent of all deaths) and girls (11per cent) aged between 5 and 19.

This month saw the launch of Mind in Bradford's latest project which aims to improve access to mental health support by placing trained staff in GP surgeries.

There are two services, with one specifically for 16 to 25-year-olds experiencing difficulties with their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Patients at any GP practice can ring their practice to arrange an evening appointment at Shipley Medical Centre or The Ridge medical practice in BD7.

Mind in Bradford's Service Director Christina Collins said half of all mental health illness began by the age of 14.

"It is also the age most likely to disengage with services," she added. "It's really important people who are beginning to struggle can find appropriate help quickly."

Guide-Line is one of three key services offered by Mind in Bradford. The charity also operates The Sanctuary, part of a network of safe spaces for those in crisis. It also offers a range of well-being sessions and recovery groups at its city centre

offices. Taster sessions are being held at its base in the city centre today.

Mind in Bradford chief executive Helen Davey said its mission was to promote mental well-being in Bradford and across the district and help people work towards recovery.

"We are working alongside mental health providers and the voluntary sector throughout Bradford to improve access to information, advice, treatment and recovery," she said.

"With growing numbers of people reaching out for help, it is essential that we work together to provide as much support as possible.

"Mental health problems can affect anyone, any day of the year but World Mental Health Day is a great day to show support.

"Today, we would like to re-assure people experiencing mental health problems that they are not alone and that there is help out there for them."

To contact Guide-Line, run by Mind in Bradford, offering mental health telephone support and information, call 01274 594594 between 12 noon and 9pm. For more information, visit mindinbradford.org.uk or mind.org.uk

● For help in crisis, contact First Response on (01274) 221181. Haven, based at the Cellar project in Shipley, and Sanctuary, at Mind in Bradford, offer safe spaces for people in crisis and referrals must be made by contacting First Response.

“Today, we want to re-assure people experiencing mental health problems that they are not alone. There is help out there

- Mind in Bradford chief executive Helen Davey

Time for employers to focus on mental health

Inverness Chamber of Commerce is one of the largest independent business organisations based in the Highlands and promotes economic growth in the area, actively campaigning for investment in infrastructure and transport to ensure the needs of the business community are met. In his regular Leader column, chamber chief executive **Stewart Nicol** urges employers of all sizes to be aware of the impact mental health issues can have on staff and others



■ Better mental health support in the workplace could save UK businesses up to £8 billion per year

Today is World Mental Health Day and a time to focus attention on an issue that affects millions of lives.

Having the World Federation of Mental Health putting the spotlight on this most sensitive but important of subjects should make us think about friends, family and work colleagues who are affected – and what we can do to help.

We know from support organisations who are members of Inverness Chamber of Commerce – such as Birchwood Highland, Spirit Advocacy and Westfield Health – that a significant number of people in the Highlands are living with mental health difficulties.

Indeed, we will be recognising this

by supporting the work of Spirit Advocacy as the recipients of our Christmas lunch charity prize draw this year.

Inverness Chamber believes it is essential that all sizes of business are aware of the impact mental health issues can have on staff and that they have appropriate support in place for employees.

The statistics are eye-opening. Birchwood figures show that one in three people in the Highlands will experience mental ill health.

Seventy-eight per cent of workers in Scotland admit to feeling stress at work, according to an Investors in People Managing Mental Health report.

And work is now the most stressful aspect of people's lives, says the charity Mind, with as many as



It should be a moral obligation for businesses to ensure their staff are not put under unnecessary stress

300,000 employees with a mental health problem losing their job every year. It should be a moral obligation for businesses to ensure their staff are not put under unnecessary stress and that systems are in place to help those who need physical or mental health assistance.

The stigma attached to mental ill health can make it difficult for those affected to seek help and, therefore, efforts must be made to remove that barrier. But it also makes business sense to provide that support.

Sickness absence and staff turnover costs businesses between £33 billion and £42bn a year, according to the UK Government's Thriving at Work report – while it has been estimated that better mental health support in the workplace can save UK businesses up to £8bn per year.

To do that, there needs to be a workplace culture that ensures employees' wellbeing and provides early support through awareness of mental health issues.

This can not only result in greater productivity, cut down on absenteeism and help profitability, it will also make for improved working conditions and help staff retention.

Interestingly, the Investors in People study showed that 15 per cent of workers would rather have workplace support for their mental health than a 3 per cent pay rise.

Mental ill health can be an isolating and often hidden problem. We owe it to our employees and colleagues to make it less lonely and more of a shared issue and to ensure that every day is World Mental Health Day.

Your Voice

THE PLACE FOR YOU TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS

Evening Express

OUR VOICE

Money talks for mental health

MONEY talks, doesn't it?

Well, in the case of Mental Health Aberdeen, that really is the case as the charity launches a new initiative to get people talking about their mental health.

To mark World Mental Health Awareness day today, it is appealing for people to donate cash so that it can help those in need.

For years, the topic has been a taboo issue, but times are changing.

People are more at ease speaking about their feelings and seeking advice to make them feel better.

But those who need the charity's help need to reach out in the first place.

As NHS Grampian's public mental health lead Dr Imran Arain says, the stigma around mental health still exists.

But speaking about the issue is the best way forward.

If you, or someone around you, is in need of help, reach out.

Tell someone how you feel. It could be the best thing you ever do.

LOTTO RESULTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LATEST DRAW | 23 26 30 32 37 39 (5) |
| Lotto Wed (Oct 3) | 3 5 11 25 27 45 (18) |
| Lotto Sat (Sept 29) | 17 36 40 44 54 58 (27) |
| Thunderball (Oct 9) | 4 15 21 23 24 (4) |
| Health Lottery (Oct 9) | 2 16 31 33 49 (3) |
| Health Lottery (Oct 6) | 13 14 30 40 41 (34) |
| Euro Millions (Oct 9) | 3 12 36 44 45 (8) (11) |
| Millionaire Maker (Oct 9) | HR BS 9 2 5 2 1 |
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SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOWS

Balmedie Beach in between a shower. Picture by reader Paul Collier, Belhelvie



SEND US YOUR PRIZE SHOT — EE.PICOFDAY@AJL.CO.UK (min 1MB)

Mindful about mental health

TODAY marks World Mental Health Day.

It provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

This year's theme, set by the World Federation for Mental Health, is young people and mental health in a changing world.

Such a theme is highly appropriate for us here in Scotland as this year, we mark the Year of Young People.

The well-documented statistics on mental health problems as they impact children and young people in Scotland are stark and speak for themselves, with more individuals than ever seeking help.

For example, by the time they're 16, roughly three children in every class will have experienced mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression and self-harm.

Without effective early intervention these conditions can clearly have a significant impact on their life chances, with not just an impact on the individual concerned but on society and the economy as a whole.

That is why we need all partners working in the sector, including the Scottish Government,

to refocus on prevention and early mental-health intervention, seeking to reduce the burden on costly specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

The cost advantages of prevention and early intervention when it comes to mental health cannot be underestimated. As an example, the cost of five sessions of school-based counselling being equivalent to just one contact with CAMHS.

Therefore, investing a fraction of the mental health budget in school counselling services helps to keep the individual in school, as well as reducing the burden on stretched and costly CAMHS provision.

As the Scottish Government prepares for its Budget on December 12, let us make this a Budget for Mental Health, where we are delivering significant investment in prevention, early intervention and

specialist CAMHS.

THE SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S SERVICES COALITION: TOM MCGHEE (CHAIRMAN, SPARK OF GENIUS), DUNCAN DUNLOP (CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WHO CARES? SCOTLAND), STUART JACOB (DIRECTOR, FALKLAND HOUSE SCHOOL), NIAL KERRY (MANAGING DIRECTOR, YOUNG FOUNDATIONS), LYNN BELL (CEO, LOVE LEARNING SCOTLAND).



Political palaver

THE most fervent of SNP supporters are of the opinion they will get independence.

As things stand at present, Theresa May says "no" and Nicola Sturgeon says "yes".

I suspect the majority of Scots are fed-up hearing about this issue.

Nevertheless, I do believe Westminster could do a lot more for the Scottish Government, which is effectively acting in a somewhat fettered and subservient role.

From a personal point of view, while I sympathise with the SNP, I am against total independence which is what they seek but are unlikely to get.

TF.

Enlightened

FRANK Gilfeather reports that some people want lighting in the Duthie park (EE, Oct 4).

Not a problem, Frank, tell 'em to get a torch! JAMES THOM, COVE BAY.

AGENDA

Why we need a Budget for Mental Health

STEPHEN MCGHEE

Depute Managing Director,
Spark of Genius

TODAY marks World Mental Health Day. It provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

This year's theme, set by the World Federation for Mental Health, is young people and mental health in a changing world. It is appropriate for us here in Scotland as this year we mark the Year of Young People.

The well-documented statistics on mental health problems as they impact children and young people in Scotland are stark and speak for themselves, with more individuals than ever seeking help. For example, it is estimated that by the time they're 16, roughly three children in every class will have experienced mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression and self-harm. In addition, half of all adults who are mentally ill experienced the onset of their mental health problems by the age of 14.

Without effective intervention these conditions can clearly have a significant impact on their life chances, affecting not only the individual concerned, but wider society and the economy as a whole.

The increase in the number of those coming forward with mental health problems is of course a welcome sign that the stigma around

mental health is reducing. However, this is clearly putting already stretched and under-resourced services under intense pressure.

That is why we need all partners working in the sector, including the Scottish Government, to re-focus on prevention and early mental health intervention, seeking to reduce the burden on costly specialist Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provision.

The Auditor General and Accounts Commission recent joint report called for a "step change" in the way the public sector responds to the mental health needs of children and young people. Like ourselves this notes a concern that the current

system is geared towards specialist care and responding to crisis, despite the Scottish Government strategy being focused on early intervention and prevention.

As the Scottish Government reveals its Budget for the forthcoming financial year on December 12, let us make this a Budget for Mental Health, where we are delivering significant investment in prevention, early intervention and specialist CAMHS.

The cost advantages of prevention and early intervention when it comes to mental health cannot be underestimated – as an example, the cost of five sessions of school-based counselling being equivalent to just one contact with CAMHS. Therefore investing a fraction of the mental health budget on school-counselling services helps to keep the individual in school, as well as reducing the

burden on stretched and costly CAMHS provision.

The Scottish Government has made recent welcome moves to address this and in its Programme for Government it announced a significant investment in school-based mental health support. This included investment of more than £60 million in additional school counselling services, supporting 350 counsellors as well as £20m for 250 additional school nurses. This will ensure that every secondary school has a counselling service.

Much has clearly been done, but there is still much work to be done to ensure Scotland's children and young people can get the right care, in the right place, at the right time, and from the right professional. For that to happen requires the private, public and third sector to work in closer partnership and for there to be significant investment in mental health services. In order to achieve this, let us make the forthcoming Scottish Government Budget a Budget for Mental Health.

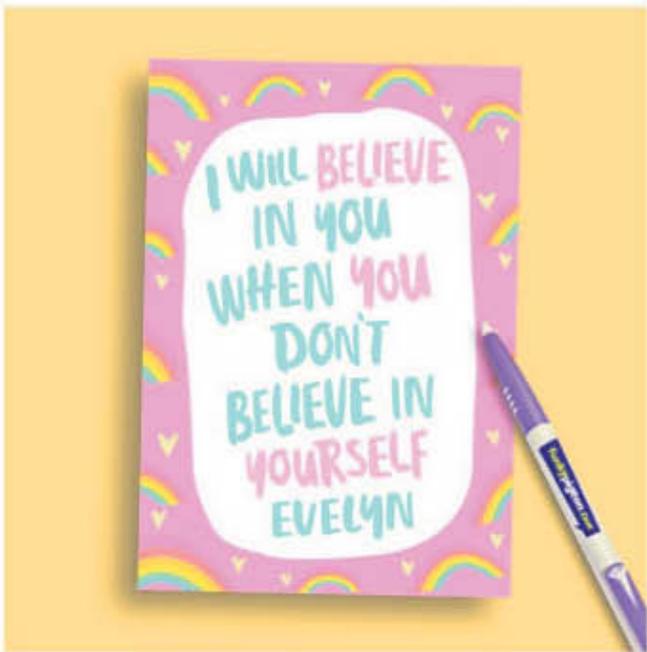
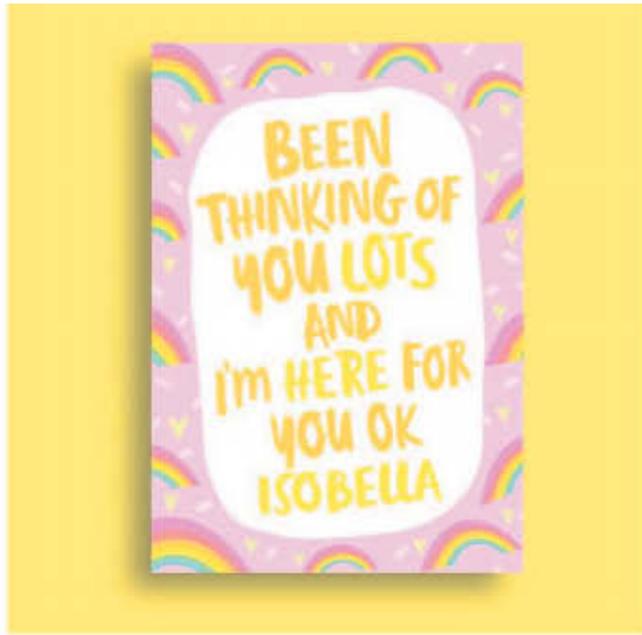
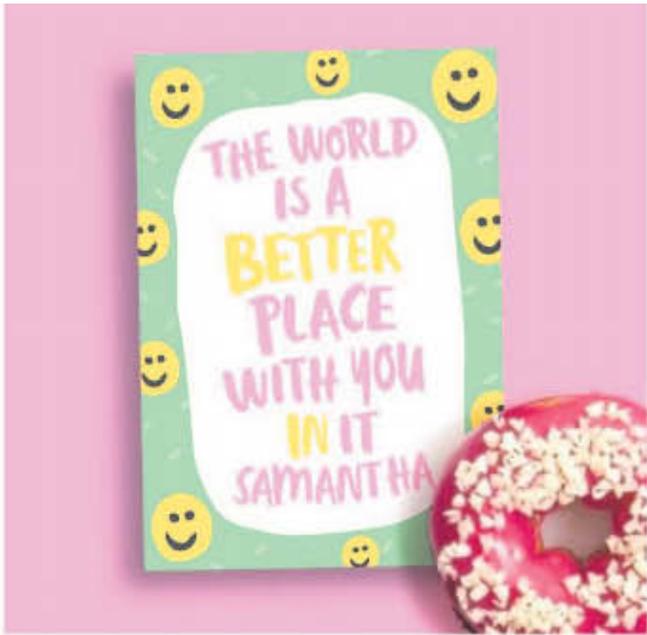
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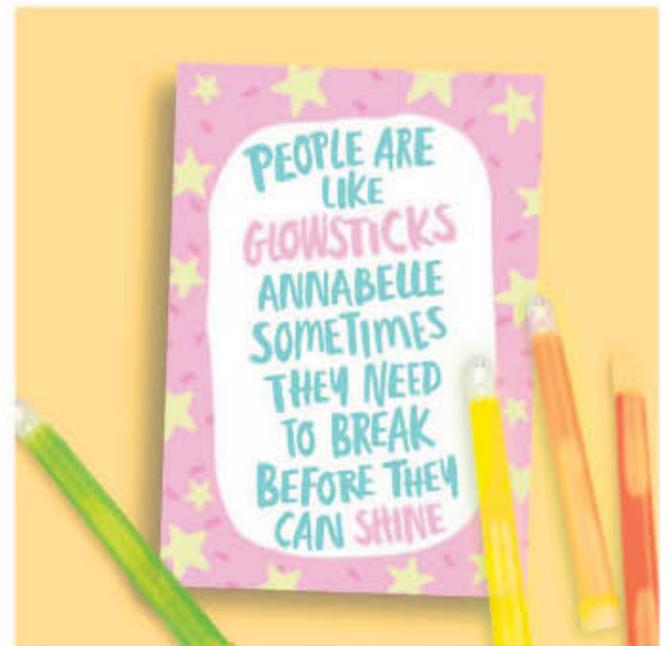
BUSINESS



SMART CARDS



On World Mental Health Day we meet the graphic designer whose personal battle inspired a pioneering business idea.
[Turn to pages 6&7](#)



Mum lays her cards on the table to help fight mental illness

With today being World Mental Health Day, graphic designer Amy Steele tells how since her harrowing ordeal with postnatal depression she has been inspired to help others through a range of cards. **Hannah Baker** reports

I BEGGED the nurses to let me die," Amy Steele tells me with a slight shake of her head.

"If it wasn't for the midwives, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you, I would be dead."

Only 18 months ago, the vivacious young woman in front of me was lying in Southmead Hospital feeling frightened, desperate and alone.

Amy had just given birth to her first child - a girl named Maddie - but she didn't feel elation; she felt like she was wading through thick fog, suffocating in the depths of her own misery.

Putting down her coffee, Amy takes out a file and opens it on the table. It is filled with colourful designs that she has created for WH Smith-owned card company Funky Pigeon to raise awareness of mental health.

One reads: *I might not always understand but I'm here for you anyway.*

"That sums up a lot of people's reaction when I told them I was depressed," she says with a soft sigh. The 31-year-old Bristolian, who works as a graphic designer for Funky Pigeon, has suffered with depression and anxiety on and off for years.

But giving birth to her daughter in February 2017 was a trigger for what was to become one of the most horrific periods of her life, as we reported in the Post on Monday.

With World Mental Health Day taking place today, Amy's goal is to break down the stigma of mental health through her story.

Amy began suffering with suicidal thoughts after having her baby.

Within days, she was sectioned under the Mental Health Act and sent away to a mother and baby unit in Nottingham.

Amy was scared about being separated from her family, but it was the only available bed in England.

She said the place felt like a prison, adding: "The unit was inside a hospital, separated by

locked doors. Although they had tried to make it look homely, it was bleak."

Eventually, Amy was allowed to return to Bristol on the condition she received support.

She moved back to her parents' house in Pucklechurch with Maddie, finding her own home was a trigger for her anxiety.

Amy's mum did night feeds with the baby so Amy could get her sleep back on track, while her dad and sister talked through everything with her for hours on end.

"They were absolutely fantastic. I own misery."



Monday's Post tells Amy's story

felt better being in my childhood home surrounded by my family."

The South Gloucestershire Crisis Team also visited Amy every day for two months, giving her therapy and medication, and teaching her breathing techniques to keep her calm.

Very slowly, Amy began to heal. However, with her maternity leave coming to an end, Amy began developing anxiety about going back to work.

Sadly, it led to a relapse. With the help of her doctor and recovery worker, Amy formed a plan and eventually agreed to go back to work three days a week.

She returned to Funky Pigeon in

October 2017.

"I was determined to go back and not use my illness as an excuse, and it wasn't as bad as I thought.

"My manager knew everything that was going on and they didn't put too much pressure on me. And after a while I realised I was beginning to enjoy it."

Not long after returning to work, Amy was struck with an idea.

"I went into the main boss's office and told him I was suffering from postnatal depression.

"He was a bit taken aback but he did know. I said I really wanted to create a range of cards dedicated to mental illness, with a helpline on the back.

"You have get-well cards for physical health but not for mental health. My grandma had sent me a card when I was poorly and it meant the world knowing she was thinking of me.

"My boss thought it was a fabulous idea - and in that moment my passion for life was sparked again."

Amy got in touch with mental health charity Mind and drew up a plan, which would mean 30 per cent of all profits from the sales of her cards would be donated to the charity.

"I did a presentation to the office on the work I was doing and single-handedly changed my boss's mind on mental health. I reduced him to tears.

"Everyone was amazing and got on board with the idea. I created a range of cards and it turned into a huge company campaign called Believe in Happy.

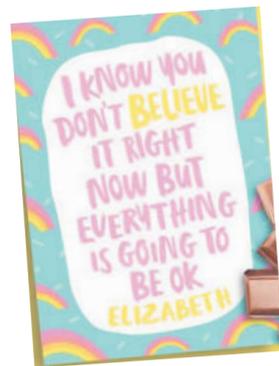
"My whole aim was to break the stigma around mental health and give people the opportunity to send someone a message to let them know they are thinking of them."

Bristol-based Pukka Tea and Frome-based chocolate company Choc on Choc got involved in the campaign, creating specially design products to go in a 'Happy Bag' that Funky Pigeon then sold online.

Amy is planning to release another series of cards next year,



Amy Steele, who is a graphic designer for gifts and greetings card Funky company Pigeon, with the firm's managing director Richard Pepper



focusing on postnatal depression. She explains: "My new range is called Warrior. It's for new mums but the sentiment behind it is for

postnatal depression.

"I know how hard it is to speak out but it was the best thing I ever did. My illness got worse before it got better but if I hadn't told someone who knows where I would be now."

She has also worked hard to change attitudes to mental health in her workplace.

"I have organised loads of fundraisers - from a breakfast of champions to a curry night.

"We have done massage workshops, we go for walks and for coffee, or do colouring and journal writing, and it has brought us closer together."

Amy also encouraged everyone in the office to write something nice about one colleague, which she then had printed onto coasters.

"We each have one on our desk

and it means that when you are having a bad day you can look down and see how much someone in that room cares about you.

"It doesn't take much to make someone happier at work. I feel everyone in the office works harder now because we have a happier environment.

"I could go to my boss and tell them if I am feeling anxious. And a couple of years ago I would not have dreamt of saying that.

"You wouldn't feel ashamed if you broke your leg - and it's the same with mental health. You are ill. The more companies that are open about it and put in place procedures to talk to someone the more it will help."

Looking to the future, Amy says she now wants to raise awareness of depression and help other peo-



You wouldn't feel ashamed if you broke your leg - and it's the same with mental health. You are ill. The more companies that are open about it and put in place procedures to talk to someone the more it will help.

ple who are suffering.

"I don't want anybody in the world to feel how I was feeling - to feel so desperate and low that you don't want to be here anymore.

"If I just help one person to say it's ok to talk about it, then my mission is accomplished."

» If you have concerns about your mental health or know someone who needs help, visit the website mind.org.uk.

» If you want to speak to someone, contact Samaritans for free on 116 123.



Front page, some of Amy Steele's cards. Above, staff taking part in Funky Pigeon Rainbow Day to raise money for mental health charity Mind; top and below, some of the 'Happy Bag' items created with Bristol-based Pukka Tea and Frome-based chocolate company Choc on Choc

