

Incorporation of the new Elizabeth Fry Charity completed

After a lot of planning and administrative challenges, the new Elizabeth Fry Charity is now fully up and running as our new legal entity. A charity in the name of Elizabeth Fry, the pioneering prison reformer, has been in existence since 1853 when The Elizabeth Fry Refuge, an institute for ex-prisoners, was founded in her memory in 1853. The women's hostel in Reading acquired 52 years ago by the charity is run today as an Approved Premises and is the primary work of the charity, supporting women on licence from prison, on bail from court, or on community sentences

Refresh of our website

Alongside the new charity we have also updated the website to enable us to publish more information for both potential residents and our supporters and volunteers. Take a look at www.elizabethfry.co.uk



Building refurbishments update

It's a big place, and we have a lot of ongoing work to do to the hostel, but thanks to some generous donations we have been able to make some much needed refurbishments. Decoration of the bedrooms has now been completed and external work to the guttering, soffits and fascias has been carried out, as well as a repaint of the railings to the front.

In addition the staff and residents have worked on a restyle of one of the rooms and have created a wonderful, stylish, calm and relaxing "Sensory Room" - somewhere to chill out, where reiki and massage can be practised and where residents can find tranquillity. The wall art is amazing..



Video conferencing equipment

Elizabeth Fry Charity are delighted to have received the funding for a video conferencing system from Thames Valley Probation Service. The benefits will be enormous for staff and residents, particularly as the very many changes coming into place within the Probation Service make the geographical regions much wider.

We were greatly helped in negotiating the purchase of the package we required by John Scrambler, Managing Director of MultiSense Communications Limited, High Wycombe. John assisted us to achieve the best all round package from the only supplier of the recognised criminal justice package required to communicate securely with the Police, Courts, Prison Service, Criminal Justice Companies and the National Probation Service. We are very grateful for the huge amount of time and patience that he contributed.

Create Confidence: bringing self-esteem and confidence to our residents

Elizabeth Fry is currently planning a new creative project called Create Confidence, which uses the arts to engage, inspire and motivate the residents and to enhance professional learning and resilience for staff.

Elizabeth Fry was one of four sites to participate in the recent Thames Valley Partnership "Women at the HeArt" project, which used the power of creativity to engage residents and to support staff and which was an Arts Council-funded programme across the Thames Valley. Professional artists visited Elizabeth Fry for two weeks and led creative sessions using a wide variety of materials and techniques, including movement and singing.

We produced a huge amount of wonderful artwork, some of which has been publicly exhibited and is now proudly displayed on the walls of the hostel and some has been given to friends and family. The workshops also had a very positive impact on self-esteem, levels of happiness, willingness to work alongside others and the idea that the women could make positive changes in their lives.



"It's great, you get to have deeper conversations with just women. I want to keep coming back ... feel better. It was fun - the sharing of it, something quite new. I'm normally quite bad at working in groups but today I've been better." Comment of a resident after one of the sessions.

Artwork displayed in the foyer at Elizabeth Fry Approved Premises

Visit from the High Sheriff



Mr Christopher Khoo, High Sheriff for The Royal County of Berkshire, visited Elizabeth Fry Charity on Wednesday 16th April 2014. Mr Khoo was recently appointed for his one-year term of office as High Sheriff for the county. We were very privileged to have Mr Khoo make his visit to us so early in his term of office.

As High Sheriff he has a great interest in the Criminal Justice system, and as we are the only female Approved Premises in the region he was very interested in our work.

Mr Khoo is promoting Healthy Eating as one of his themes for this term of office. It is hoped that residents from Elizabeth Fry will contribute by way of their favourite recipes to his book.

Cooking course

We are hoping to offer the residents a course in cooking and food planning. It will be designed to teach the women how to prepare food safely, undertake the budgeting and shopping for meals and gain an understanding of how planning can help them produce nutritious meals on a limited budget. They will learn about healthy options and how to keep their families and themselves at an optimum weight. There will also be further opportunity to undertake training in childhood nutrition. On completion they will receive a City and Guilds Accreditation level 2 in Food Safety and Hygiene.

We have been fortunate to receive a donation towards this project from the Dorothy Bayles Trust, for which we are grateful, and we continue to seek donations to run the course on a regular basis.

Your support is appreciated

To make a donation to Elizabeth Fry Charity to support us in our work, please go to our localgiving page. Please tick yes to Gift Aid on any donation that you make.

<http://localgiving.com/charity/elizabethfrycharity>

Elizabeth Fry Charity is registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee, no. 8606716. Registered charity no. 1152840.

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