

## 200 Year Celebrations

2017 marks 200 years since Elizabeth Fry established the Association for the Improvement of Female Prisoners and along with a group of 12 other women lobbied authorities including Parliament. In the 1820s she inspected prison conditions, advocated reform and established further groups to campaign for reform. In 1823 prison reform legislation was finally introduced in Parliament.

Elizabeth Fry died in 1845. Wishing to commemorate her work the Lord Mayor of London convened a meeting at which it was decided to found an institute for ex-prisoners in her memory – the Elizabeth Fry Refuge. In 1924 it was reconstituted as a charitable organisation and became a hostel for girls on Probation which in 1949 was officially approved by the Home Office. It moved to Coley Avenue in Reading in 1962.

We will be celebrating this important anniversary in a number of ways during the year. In May some of our Trustees and CEO are attending an event at the Old Bailey to recognise the work of Elizabeth Fry. The Old Bailey is on the site of the former Newgate Prison where Elizabeth Fry had such an important role in improving conditions for women prisoners. A number of descendants of Elizabeth Fry will be attending this event, so it will undoubtedly be a fascinating evening.

The 200 year celebrations will continue at the Charity's own Open Day on Friday 23 June 2017, where the building will be formally renamed "Elizabeth Fry House". Please do put this date in your diary and join us if you are able.



## Visit by Minister for Victims, Youth and Family Justice

In February Elizabeth Fry staff and trustees were pleased to welcome a visit from Dr Phillip Lee M.P., Justice Minister for Victims, Youth and Family Justice. He met with two trustees and our Operations Manager, Lauren Oakley, discussing a wide range of issues in relation to offending by women. Lauren explained some of the complex challenges facing women who are moving away from offending with the support of Elizabeth Fry Charity, and the difficulties this can pose for staff working in the Approved Premises. Given his background in medicine he was interested in health issues, including mental health, and access to appropriate provision faced by many women who stay at Elizabeth Fry.

He was especially interested in our experience of working with a wide range of partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors, for example: women's prisons, police, and local authorities. He recognised the importance of even greater cooperation between the various agencies to support our resident's efforts to stop offending. Some of his thoughts were in line with proposals previously brought to parliament by one of our Patrons, Baroness Corston.

After a short tour of the building, Dr. Lee's parting comments were very positive remarking on the high quality of provision at Elizabeth Fry and the work undertaken with our residents.



Dr Phillip Lee M.P

Elizabeth Fry Trustees and Staff are always pleased when it is possible to host visits by MPs by any party in our efforts to improve understanding of the needs of women offenders and to seek influence to improvements in provision.

# Thank You!



Thank you to those who have supported Elizabeth Fry Charity over the past year through financial or in kind donations. Your support really does make a difference to the women we work with. We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported us and in particular to:

- GML Ltd
- The Garfield Weston Foundation
- Santander
- The Stevenson Family Trust
- Waitrose, Oxford Road Branch
- HH Judge Smith
- Soroptimist International – Newbury & District Branch
- Volkswagen Reading
- The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales
- The Pilgrim Trust

## Meet Natasha – Referral and Support Manager



I joined Elizabeth Fry Charity as the Referral and Support Manager in December 2015. I had previously worked as a Prison Officer in a women's prison. My role at Elizabeth Fry involves processing referrals that are made for women to the Approved Premises. I liaise with partner agencies such as the Probation Service, Prison Service, Police and health services

to ensure that we have all the information we need to support the woman once she comes to Elizabeth Fry.

What I find most rewarding about my role is seeing residents make changes in their lives and move on from the Approved Premises with more confidence, greater opportunities and increased optimism for the future. Finding suitable move on accommodation can pose a real challenge for some of our residents and I would love to see the Elizabeth Fry Charity expand its accommodation to provide move on accommodation.

## Improving our outside space



We have now completed the project to improve the area in front of the main Approved Premises building. This has involved the removal of a number of trees, a new front wall opening up a second entrance/exit and a new car park surface being laid. The result is a larger parking area with defined spaces and a more attractive aspect.

## FastTrack FitCamp raises funds for Elizabeth Fry Charity



A big thank you to everyone at FastTrack Fit Camp in Wokingham who made to the session on Sunday 26 March and raised £210 for Elizabeth Fry Charity!

FastTrack Fit Camp ([www.fasttrack-fitcamp.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack-fitcamp.co.uk)) is owned and run by Heidi Strickland-Clark. Heidi asks clients to recommend charities to support and each month a charity is chosen for which to fundraise. We are delighted that Elizabeth Fry was chosen as the Charity for March.

## Yoga at Elizabeth Fry Charity

We continue to expand the services available to women at Elizabeth Fry Charity and have delivered weekly yoga and relaxation sessions since January 2017. The main aims of the sessions are to support women to manage feelings of stress, anxiety and depression in a way which is compatible with other interventions such as medication and counselling. In addition, we aim to provide residents with an opportunity to experience and test new things in order to discover what helps them.

Sessions are delivered each Tuesday morning by a fully qualified instructor and are attended by up to ten residents. Feedback from the resident group has been positive with 78% of residents stating that sessions have helped them to relax and deal with feelings of stress.

## Your support is appreciated

To make a donation to Elizabeth Fry Charity to support us in our work, please go to our [localgiving](http://localgiving.com) page. Please tick yes to Gift Aid on any donation that you make.

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