

Thankyou for the Fivers!

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who came to the Charity's Open Day in June and brought Elizabeth Fry home by donating their old £5 notes. We raised £850 on the day which was a fantastic amount.

The paper £5 remains in circulation until May 2017 and we will be delighted to receive any further donations of your old fivers (or any other denomination!). Please send any donations to Sam Wilson, Finance Manager, Elizabeth Fry Charity, 6 Coley Avenue, Reading RG1 6LQ.

Introducing Olaf

Olaf, a registered Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog has been making regular visits to the Approved Premises since the beginning of the summer. Many of the women that we work with experience mental health issues, have low levels of confidence and self-esteem and are dealing with feelings of loss due to being separated from their families, particularly their children. Animals have been used as therapy in many different settings for a number of years. Holisticonline.com states that "Unlike people, with whom our interactions may be quite complex and unpredictable, animals provide a constant source of comfort and focus for attention. Animals bring out our nurturing instinct. They also make us feel safe and unconditionally accepted." Residents can choose whether or not to spend time with Olaf and the impact on those that do engage in the sessions has been clear. Members of the staff team have reported seeing women's faces physically change as they appear to have properly relaxed for the first time since arrival.

Feedback from residents has included the following:



"I got enjoyment, comfort, distraction and fulfilment from Olaf being here and I found it to be very therapeutic."

"I have missed having animal company and enjoying the activity that comes without the pressure of conversation."

Improving the Charity's outside space

We have embarked on a project to improve the area in front of the main Approved Premises building. This has already involved the removal of a number of trees and we will soon have a new front wall, which will open up a second entrance/exit for the car park. The final part of the project will involve the gravel being removed and a new surfacing being laid. Whilst we are fortunate to have space for parking on premises, many of you who have visited the charity over the years will have experienced having your car blocked in or stepping out of your car into a puddle of water! Thus the intended outcomes of this project will be a larger parking area, with clearly defined and accessible parking spaces, a more attractive aspect and reduced noise and disturbance for our neighbours.

Website and a short film

The new Elizabeth Fry Charity website was launched on 1 December. We are delighted with the new site and incredibly grateful to Skyron who developed the website free of charge.

Residents and staff have, along with some professional help, created a short film about life at Elizabeth Fry. The film was made so that women in custody who may be referred to the Approved Premises could find out more about what it is really like, what will be expected of them as well as the support that is available.

You can see the website and view the film by visiting www.elizabethfry.co.uk

Support Us

You can support the work of Elizabeth Fry Charity by making a donation via Local Giving www.localgiving.org/elizabethfrycharity

Christmas is often a very difficult time for residents, many of whom are not in contact with their loved ones and remain at the hostel over the Christmas and New Year period. We are therefore seeking donations of toiletries, chocolates and other luxury items that we can give to residents to help make this time of year a little more special.

Thank you

Trustees and staff would like to say a big thank you to Andy Storch, who resigned as a Trustee this year after 12 years of service to Elizabeth Fry Charity. We wish Andy all the best for the future.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported Elizabeth Fry Charity this year, especially our volunteers who contribute in many varied ways.

Rowse Family Trust Donation

Thank you to the Rowse Family Trust who have donated £5,000 to enable a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Advisor to come to the Approved Premises once a week and meet with residents on a one to one basis. The aims of the service are to support women in dealing with practical issues, with a particular focus on developing financial management skills. In addition, the service provides women with the opportunity to engage with CAB Advisors with the intention that a positive experience may lead them to access the service for support once they have moved on from the Approved Premises. The Advisor has been able to support women to address a range of issues and reports that the service offered at Elizabeth Fry differs from the standard CAB service in respect of the emotional support offered. She said that “whilst coming out of prison is perceived as positive, it also means taking responsibility for issues which may have got worse during the sentence – debts escalated to bailiffs, court fines to pay, child custody issues where the custodial parent has moved to an unknown address.” The funding from the Rowse family has enabled the Charity to continue to provide this valuable service for a further seven months – thank you.

Elizabeth Fry is looking for Trustees.

Elizabeth Fry is a charity governed by a Board of Trustees. In pursuing the charity’s objectives, which were originally set out in an Act of Parliament, the Board aspires to achieve best practice and good governance.

Trustees have a broad range of backgrounds and skills; experience of working in or knowledge of the criminal justice system is not a requirement. Your motivation to help the charity pursue its aim to support women offenders is what is most important. Trustees are expected to attend six board meetings a year and join at least one of the charity’s committees that carry out much of the detailed work of the Board.

In addition, Trustees take it in turn to visit the Approved Premises – these visits may include attending residents’ and staff meetings, observing group work sessions and talking informally to staff and residents.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of Elizabeth Fry Charity and believe you have the skills and qualities required, please contact Fiona Humphreys, Chief Executive on fiona.humphreys@probation.gsi.gov.uk or 0118 9572385 for more information and an application pack.

Meet Thembie – Housing and Link Worker



“I joined Elizabeth Fry Charity as a Resettlement and Support Officer (RSO) in March 2015. The role involved providing day to day support to residents at the Approved Premises, monitoring behaviour to ensure licence conditions are complied with and sharing information with colleagues and partner agencies.

The aspect of the role that I find most rewarding is the fact that my focus is on looking to the future, encouraging residents to be proactive and supporting them to achieve their goals.”

Read more about Thembie’s role on the Elizabeth Fry Charity website.

Elizabeth Fry Charity would like to thank the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales for funding the Housing and Link Worker role for three years.

Feedback from Residents

We wrote to nearly 200 current and ex-residents in July asking them for feedback on their experience of being at the Approved Premises. We were pleased to receive 46 responses and with the feedback we received with 67% describing the service the Charity provides as either excellent or good. We will use the feedback from the questionnaires to help us decide our priorities for the future.

This is what some of the women who completed the questionnaires had to say:

“A big thank you for being there when it mattered.”

“Since I have left the hostel I’ve had my ups and downs, but I could not have done it without the support from the hostel – thank you.”

“I would recommend Elizabeth Fry to any women who need to build their independence and confidence.”



Newsletter

December 2016

Elizabeth Fry Charity

Supporting women to make positive changes in their lives
