



Trustees Annual Report 2019-20

BEST, Befriending and Support Team for Foreign Nationals in HMP Wandsworth
Registered Charity No: 1177625

Foreword

Throughout the year BEST has had approximately 20 volunteers regularly visiting foreign nationals at HMP Wandsworth. On 23 March 2020, when the lockdown came into effect, we had to suspend visits until further notice. On 20 July the prison resumed Social Visits. However, visitor numbers have been halved owing to restrictions imposed by social distancing. Throughout the year, including the lockdown, BEST has continued operating in the prison, with the Director attending the prison 5 days a week.

The year in summary

At time of writing in late July 2020, a key priority is to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of the Coronavirus crisis. This means, when the lockdown is more fully eased, getting back into action as swiftly as possible. Having built a strong team of volunteers we want to do all we can to keep them actively involved, and for BEST to revert to operating as normally as circumstances allow. The challenges will include ensuring compliance with the stringent healthcare regulations, such as no physical contact and the need to keep a “social distance” of 2 metres.

At time of writing in late July 2020 Foreign Nationals represent 49.7% of the prison population of just over 1,500. This is a higher proportion than usual, largely because Immigration has not worked in the prison since before the lockdown and this, combined with the Coronavirus crisis, has prolonged detention of many who would otherwise have been released. In the prison we are typically dealing with 30 cases a week, mostly relating to healthcare, exercise, education, in-prison work, contact with loved ones, appointing or chasing lawyers, understanding and responding to Home Office and other official papers (usually on deportation or extradition), preparations for release, with about 10% of cases involving concerns relating to bullying, incompatible cell-mates and complaints against staff.

In January 2020, after nearly 3 years as a Trustee and our Head of Training, Olivia Beer left us to concentrate on her career at the Ministry of Justice. She was replaced both as a Trustee and Head of Training, by Françoise Petre, who has previously worked with Hibiscus - <https://hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk> - and, as Françoise is security-cleared and key-trained, she has also worked in HMPW, including (until 23 March) regular attendance at the weekly BEST Friday surgeries in Legal Visits.

BEST prison visits remain a vital component of our core mission, bringing immediate and enduring benefits to the men visited. Having said this, the fact remains that almost all the FNO's we work with also require in-prison support, and providing that support requires us to operate regularly in the prison. Of necessity, this requires a number of volunteers who are security-vetted and key-trained and can, therefore, enter the prison freely and see the men

on the Wings, as required. At present we have four such volunteers: Geoff Smith, the Director, Françoise Petre, Isobel Smallacombe and Leona Potter. In the year ahead we hope to add one or two more to this team of volunteers who can also operate within the prison.

Lack of funds (we currently have just over £400 in the bank) has meant we have had only marginal involvement with support “through the gate”, mainly involving 4 ex-offenders who became known to BEST while still in custody in 2018-19.

We are currently dealing with some 110 cases a month. Since 7 August 2019 prisoners can contact BEST via the prison kiosk, and to date (25 July 2020) we have had 596 kiosk applications. This represents 45% of the total number of cases BEST deals with, and each week we send relevant details to the Equalities Department, indicating name and NOMIS number of prisoners seen, and a short description of the subject matter. An overview of the total number of cases and the referral source is given in the table below:

Overview of BEST cases 1 August 2019 – 1 August 2020

Referral Source	Referrals per month	Referrals per year	%
Prison kiosk	50	600	45
Prison staff	16	190	15
CRC	14	170	13
Prisoners	11	135	10
Chaplaincy	10	125	09
Other*	9	110	08
TOTAL	110	1330	100%

Minor errors due to rounding

* “Other” is mainly comprised of Immigration, Healthcare, and “partner organisations”

As ever, it is impossible to overstate the importance of our relations with staff and these can honestly be described as excellent. Certainly, cooperation from officers on the Wings and senior management has been consistently strong.

Finally, we wish to stress how pleased we are with the calibre and commitment of our volunteers. Although still a relatively small group, BEST volunteers have made a hugely beneficial contribution to prison life and the morale of the men we befriend and support - helping them to engage more fully with prison life and view their longer-term future more positively.

Thanks to our donors

We would like to thank all those who have supported BEST with generous donations, most notably in the last year including Balham Baptist Church, the Wandsworth Quakers and a small number of generous private donors.

Summary

Although BEST has had another productive year we are acutely aware the charity needs to build its infrastructure: the most pressing need being to build a core team of full-time paid staff. Otherwise, over-dependence on a small number of key volunteers leaves BEST exposed to the risk that, if two or three key volunteers disappear, BEST may not survive. For this reason, and because BEST remains sole provider of a charitable service aimed at 40-50% of the prison population benefiting over 1,300 prisoners a year, a key goal in the year ahead will

be to raise enough funds to build our infrastructure and ensure we survive and make an increasingly significant contribution to the quality of prison life - both for prisoners and prison staff.

BEST Trustees:

Isobel Smallacombe

Isobel Smallacombe

Christine Julian-Huxley

Christine Julian-Huxley

Caroline Ayerst

Caroline Ayerst

Françoise Petre

Françoise Petre

Independent Examiner's Report
Financial Statements for the Year Ended
5 April 2020
for

BEST Befriending and Support Team for Foreign Nationals in HMP Wandsworth

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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BEST BEFRIENDING AND SUPPORT
TEAM FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS IN HMP WANDSWORTH**

In accordance with the Charities Act 2011 Chapters 1 and 3, I report on the charity's financial statements for the year ended 5 April 2020, set out on pages 5 and 6.

The respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

Section 130 (1) The charity trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounting records kept in respect of the charity, which are sufficient to show and explain all the charity's transactions, and which are such as to disclose at any time, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the charity at that time.

In applying Section 133, the charity's gross income for the financial year ended 5 April 2020 did not exceed £250,000, therefore the charity trustees, in respect of that year, elected to prepare a receipts and payments account, instead of a statement of accounts under section 132(1).

In applying the Section 133 (b) the charity's gross income in for the year ended 5 April 2020 did not exceed the accounts threshold as specified in section 133 (account and statement an option for lower-income charities), in accordance the charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for the year ended 5 April 2020 under section 144 (2).

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the financial statements under section 145,
- to follow the procedures set out in the general directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

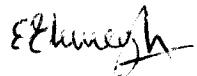
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met;

or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Emma Ekwegh
88 Abbotts Road
Mitcham
CR4 1JW

15 December 2020

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2020

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted fund	5 th April 2020 Total funds	5 th April 2019 Total funds
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	1,995	-	1,995	4,310
Investment income	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,995	-	1,995	4,310
 RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Charitable activities				
Resources Expended on Charitable Activities	1,534	-	1,534	6,976
Support costs	356	-	356	910
Governance costs	240	-	240	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2,130	-	2,130	7,886
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES	(135)	-	(135)	(3,576)
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	722	-	722	4,298
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	587	-	587	722
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DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2020

	5 th April 2020	5 th April 2019
	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary income		
Donations	1,800	4,310
Gift aid	-	-
Sundry	195	-
	<hr/> 1,995	<hr/> 4,310
Investment income		
Interest on savings	-	-
	<hr/> -	<hr/> -
Total incoming resources	1,995	4,310
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Charitable activities		
Help to Detainees and Mentees	60	6,713
Post-release support	1,469	-
Prison Visitor Expenses	5	238
Membership fees	-	25
	<hr/> 1,534	<hr/> 6,976
Support costs		
Bank charges	-	-
Website fees	179	307
Printing	104	367
Postage and stationery	39	60
Sundry	34	176
	<hr/> 356	<hr/> 910
Governance		
Accountancy fee	240	-
Other professional fees	-	-
	<hr/> 240	<hr/> -
Total resources expended	2,130	7,886
Net (expenditure)/income	(135)	(3,576)
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>