



Trustees Annual Report 2018-19

BEST, Befriending and Support Team for Foreign Nationals in HMP Wandsworth

Registered Charity No: 1177625

Foreword

BEST has made good progress this year, assisted by the allocation of an office on C Wing and strong support from prison management, enabling particularly close cooperation with colleagues in Safer Custody, Chaplaincy, Immigration, Equalities, and the officers on C Wing (now the main Wing for vulnerable Foreign Nationals). We expect our involvement with Immigration and Safer Custody to increase further when, as part of the drive to reduce self-harm and suicide, a BEST Visit Request Form will be delivered to all prisoners served with deportation or extradition papers, as planned in July 2019. This report will now be divided into the following sections: 1. Challenges, 2. Achievements, 3. Thanks to our donors, and 4. Summary.

1. Challenges

Over the next 12 months the main challenge will be to make sure our capabilities keep pace with the increasing responsibilities the prison is assigning to BEST. At present, we have just over 30 active volunteers, though only half are currently engaged in regular prison visits. This is partly because some FN's are still unaware of BEST and the services we provide, partly because of the high "churn" that is inevitable in a remand prison with so many FN's (who comprise 1/3rd of the prison population at HMPW, currently some 570 men), and partly because we don't yet have enough human resources for BEST to operate - as we and the prison management would like - as an integral part of the induction process on E Wing. As a result, when many FN's are transferred from the Induction Wing they start prison life unseen by BEST, unaware of how BEST can support them (regardless of whether they speak English), and all too frequently with their essential needs remaining unmet.

There is no doubt that prison visits conducted by our volunteers in the Social Visits Hall are a vital feature of BEST services, delivering manifestly beneficial effects for the prisoners visited, enabling them to talk freely and openly and discuss whatever they want, including their own and their family's support needs. Nevertheless, most of the FN's we work with require in-prison support, rather than a visitor, and these services can only be supplied by volunteers working within the prison i.e. those who have been security-vetted and key-trained and can operate freely within the prison. At present we have only four such volunteers: Geoff Smith, the Director (in prison 5 days a week), Lavinia Aleri (in prison 2 days a week), and Isobel Smallacombe and Leona Potter, both of whom have recently received full clearance and are expected to be in prison three or four times a month. As highest demand for our services is

for in-prison support, over the next 12 months we hope to add at least two and, ideally, four more volunteers who can also operate within the prison.

The other key challenge is to raise more funds. Owing to the high demands on time and money of supporting men “through the gate”, we have had to cut back on post-release support and plan in future to focus on in-prison activities, referring such cases to other organisations such as CRC, Migrants Organise, Social Services etc.

As many of the FN’s we work with are also illegals, their support needs are usually both urgent and extreme, with most released homeless and, as illegals, they are not allowed to work, receive benefits, or access public funds and are, consequently, effectively reliant on BEST to meet their survival needs. With great regret, in early 2019 we found we were simply unable to sustain our support activities “through the gate” and, having by April 2019 spent all but £200 of our money on post-release support, we had to freeze all further spending.

We therefore urgently need to replenish our funds, firstly so we can cover the costs of our in-prison activities, such as volunteer and essential operational expenses and, in the longer term, so we can employ a core team of full-time staff. Without this, there is a risk that, if BEST were to lose two or three key volunteers, the charity could simply collapse, wiping out our achievements to date - and we intend to do all we possibly can to prevent that from happening.

2. Achievements

We are now dealing with 25-30 cases a week, typically involving help in accessing 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 addition to helping Foreign National prisoners, this is also an important way of helping prison staff.

Throughout the year support from senior management has been outstanding, marked by Governor Sethi (Head of Foreign Nationals) awarding BEST an office on C Wing in early 2019 and, in addition to the weekly surgeries in Legal Visits every Friday from 08:30 to 11:45, in January 2019 we started running weekly surgeries on C Wing from 09:00 to 11:30. With effect from August 2019, FN prisoners will also be able to access BEST via the kiosks located on each level of all the prison Wings.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of our relations with staff and, with BEST stickers now featuring on dozens of cell doors and BEST a recognised presence in all Wings, relations with staff are excellent. This was reflected in a letter of 10 June sent by Governor No 1, Jeanne Bryant, to the BEST Director, following commendation from anonymous colleagues acknowledging “the incredible work” done by BEST, adding: “This level of commitment and professionalism is highly commendable and is rightly being recognised. We applaud your “can-do” attitude and the enthusiasm you consistently display when carrying out your duties. Thank you and well done.”

Following a referral from Chaplaincy, in March we conducted our first visit to HMP Pentonville, and now have two volunteers (who live closer to HMPP) allocated to visiting there. In Spring of 2019 we also visited colleagues at HMP High Down to discuss launching BEST there, but for the time being - until we have more available volunteers - we remain focused on HMP Wandsworth, while planning to grow our involvement at Pentonville.

Finally, we wish to stress how pleased we are with the calibre and commitment of our volunteers. Although still a relatively small group, we believe our volunteers have made an enormous contribution to prison life and the morale of the men we befriend and support - helping them to make the most of their time in prison and cultivate a positive view of their future.

3. Thanks to our donors

We would like to thank all those who have supported BEST with generous donations, notably including:

LUSH - <https://uk.lush.com>, who made a very generous donation which helped us in supporting 15 men "through the gate" in 2018

St Anne's Church, Wandsworth - <https://stanneswandsworth.org.uk> - who kindly donated half their Christmas collection in 2017, which was spent both on enabling our in-prison activities and supporting the 15 men we helped "through the gate" in 2018

St Luke's, Battersea - <https://www.stlukeschurch.org.uk/welcome.htm> - for their generous support and donations, most of which was spent on travel and other essential expenses associated with our work in-prison.

4. Summary

While pleased with the progress BEST has made over the last year we are aware that to achieve our longer-term goals - notably, increase our capabilities so we can adequately discharge the increasing responsibilities assigned to us in the prison - we must grow our in-prison capabilities and strengthen our infrastructure.

Provided we can do this we are confident BEST has a bright future, capable of establishing wider recognition as a prison charity delivering services with long-term benefits for our primary beneficiaries - staff and inmates at the prisons in which BEST operates - and breathing new life into prisons being seen as places of genuine reform.

BEST Trustees:

Isobel Smallacombe <i>I. Smallacombe</i>
Christine Julian-Huxley <i>C. Julian-Huxley</i>
Caroline Ayerst <i>C. Ayerst</i>
Olivia Beer <i>O. Beer</i>

Independent Examiners Report
Financial Statements for the Period
20 March 2018 To 5 April 2019
for

BEST Befriending and Support Team for Foreign Nationals in HMP Wandsworth

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20 MARCH 2018 To 5 APRIL 2019**

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTESS 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 from **20th March 2018 to the period ended 5 April 2019**, 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 period from **20th March 2018 to 5 April 2019** 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 for the financial period from **20th March 2018 to 5 April 2019** 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 financial period from **20th March 2018 to 5 April 2019** 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

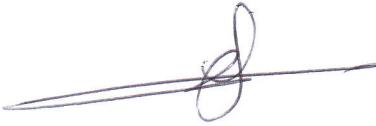
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- 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



John Parris
Accountant
30 Green Dragon House
64 – 70 High Street
Croydon
CR0 1FS

31 October 2019

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD
20 MARCH 2018 To 5 APRIL 2019

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	5 th April 2019 Total funds	19 th March 2018 Total funds
<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	4,310	-	4,310	2,402
Investment income	-	-	-	-
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	4,310	-	4,310	2,402
 <u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>				
Charitable activities				
Resources Expended on Charitable Activities	6,976	-	6,976	222
Support costs	910	-	910	746
Governance costs	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7,886	-	7,886	968
 NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(3,576)	-	(3,576)	1,434
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds opening balance	4,298	-	4,298	2,864
 TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	722	-	722	4,298
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

**DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD
20 MARCH 2018 To 5 APRIL 2019**

	5 th April 2019	19 th March 2018
<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>		
Voluntary income		
Donations	4,310	2,402
Interest Received	-	-
Sundry	-	-
Total incoming resources	4,310	2,402
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>		
Charitable Activities		
Help to Detainees & Mentees	6713	-
Prison Visitors Expenses	238	197
Membership Fees	25	25
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	6,976	222
Support Costs		
Bank Charges	-	5
Website Fees	307	-
Printing	367	-
Postage and Stationery	60	477
Sundry	176	264
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	910	746
Total Resources Expended	7,886	968
Net (Expenditure)/Income	(3,576)	1,434
	<hr/>	<hr/>