



Trustees Annual Report 2020-21

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

Registered Charity No: 1177625

Foreword

In another year dominated by the pandemic, we are pleased to report that BEST was again able to continue a 5-day week in the prison, underscoring its importance in a prison where Foreign Nationals comprise half the prison population, currently equivalent to some 700 men. Let's here dwell on one remarkable achievement at HMP Wandsworth: so far not a single prisoner or member of staff has died from Covid. Needless to say, this does nothing to diminish the hardships endured since the pandemic began, or the challenges ahead: but it is still an achievement not even the rosiest optimist would have predicted at the start of the pandemic and it augurs well for the future of HMPW and, indeed, the charity of which we are so proud to be Trustees.

The year in summary

As 2021 nears its end, the all-too familiar restrictions of the last 20 months appear to be easing - making it easier for prisoners to access Education, Exercise, Activities, seeing a welcome resumption of duties by the Immigration Team, though a return to pre-lockdown freedom of movement on the Wings is still eagerly awaited i.e. an end to the regime of 23-hours a day "behind the door". Of particular importance to BEST has been the resumption of Social Visits.

As social visiting is such a crucial aspect of our activities, it seems worth explaining that prior to the pandemic we had 25 volunteers regularly conducting prison visits, falling at the height of the pandemic to 7 who (when this was allowed) continued visiting their men who requested a BEST visitor. Our recruitment drive over recent months has brought in 15 new volunteers, suggesting that by this time next year we can realistically expect, not just to have recovered from the losses of the pandemic, but to have more BEST volunteers than ever before.

Inside the prison BEST has supported more than 1,000 individual prisoners, helping over 300 deal with immigration issues, over 40 with asylum claims and more than 50 make immigration bail applications, with bail granted in approximately 33% of cases. Each month BEST typically engages with not less than 15 men at risk from suicide or self-harm (SASH), including regular attendance at ACCT reviews i.e. the multi-party interview with prisoners deemed to be a SASH risk, identifying the support needed, the frequency of future observations and, generally, what measures need to be taken to keep the prisoner as safe and well as possible. With the help of colleagues at the Ministry of Justice and the Finance Department at HMP Wandsworth we have also created a BEST account from which emergency funds can be allocated to the most needy and vulnerable i.e. for phone calls to lawyers and loved ones, reading material, "distraction packs" or whatever is needed to help them cope with prison life.

On D Wing, the Substance Abuse Wing, we have continued with the weekly BEST surgery on Wednesdays attracting 15-20 men per week, dealing with familiar issues such as understanding official papers, challenging - and no less frequently seeking to expedite - deportation, extradition, contacting loved ones, chasing unreliable lawyers, liaising with healthcare, complaints, preparations for release etc. Every month we receive over 80 applications for BEST support from prisoners using the prison kiosk with over 100 additional referrals from prison officers, partner organisations and prisoners approaching us directly on the Wings.

From George Pugh, Residential Governor, HMP Wandsworth we received the following testimonial: *"Your service is invaluable to this vulnerable cohort of prisoners. I know they appreciate your independence, your holistic approach to their wellbeing, and your extensive knowledge of both prison and Home Office processes. The presence of your service as an independent advocate is especially valuable, providing foreign national prisoners with a sense of hope and support, which is all too often in short supply."*

The Year Ahead

In the year ahead our most important challenge will be to raise funds to start paying our full-time workers i.e. transforming BEST into a professionally operated charity. We plan to raise more than £25,000, and once this target has been reached we will approach some of the larger charities seeking a transformational donation, so that as well as employing staff to work in the prison we can hire experts where we most need them - notably including an IT expert who can help us to manage and improve our website and a fund-raiser.

Thanks to our donors

We would like to thank all those who have supported BEST with generous donations, most notably including the Quakers, Bill Travers for running a sponsored half-marathon and raising over £1,000, St Luke's Church, Battersea, All Saints Fulham and all who have privately donated so generously to BEST.

BEST Trustees:

Isobel Smallacombe

Christine Julian-Huxley

Caroline Ayerst

Isobel Smallacombe
Christine Julian-Huxley
Caroline Ayerst

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1177625

Independent Examiner's Report
Financial Statements for the Year Ended
5 April 2021
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 2021, 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 2021 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 2021 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 2021 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

28 December 2021

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2021

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted fund	5 th April 2021 Total funds	5 th April 2020 Total funds
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	4,900	-	4,900	1,995
Investment income	-	-	-	-
	<u>4,900</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,900</u>	<u>1,995</u>
 RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Charitable activities				
Resources Expended on Charitable Activities	1,030	-	1,030	1,534
Support costs	441	-	441	356
Governance costs	-	-	-	240
	<u>1,471</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,471</u>	<u>2,130</u>
 NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES	 3,429	 -	 3,429	 (135)
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	<u>587</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>587</u>	<u>722</u>
 TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	 <u><u>4,016</u></u>	 <u><u>-</u></u>	 <u><u>4,016</u></u>	 <u><u>587</u></u>

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2021

	5 th April 2021 £	5 th April 2020 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary income		
Donations	4,870	1,800
Gift aid	30	-
Sundry	-	195
	<u>4,900</u>	<u>1,995</u>
Investment income		
Interest on savings	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total incoming resources	<u>4,900</u>	<u>1,995</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Charitable activities		
Help to Detainees and Mentees	529	60
Post-release support	469	1,469
Prison Visitor Expenses	2	5
Membership fees	30	-
	<u>1,030</u>	<u>1,534</u>
Support costs		
Bank charges	-	-
Website fees	225	179
Printing	108	104
Postage and stationery	60	39
Sundry	48	34
	<u>441</u>	<u>356</u>
Governance		
Accountancy fee	-	240
Other professional fees	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>240</u>
Total resources expended	<u>1,471</u>	<u>2,130</u>
Net (expenditure)/income	<u>3,429</u>	<u>(135)</u>