

Babies In Prison

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Patrons:

The Lord Ramsbotham GCB CBE
The Baroness Stern CBE
Mrs Dorothy Salmon OBE FRSA
Dame Philippa Russell DBE

Annual report 2014-2015

There have been few changes this year with the charity continuing to support the babies in the Mother and Baby Units by providing experiences and play/educational items. Our summer book and Christmas present projects were again two annual highlights for the Units. Our funding has continued at its reduced level and has been skilfully managed by economies in costs.

Changes

There have been no changes to personnel during the past year.

Costs

We have continued to keep our costs down to the 'bare bones'. Our telephone and similar costs have been maintained at the low level we achieved last year. Our thanks go to Voluntary Action Maidstone for continuing to receive our mail. Trustees now meet in London only twice a year and hold conference calls between them as necessary. We appreciate the support of Sir Robert McAlpine's staff who have allowed us to use their offices for meetings for many years.

Overall news of Mother and Baby Units

There are now seven units since Holloway's closure in 2013. During 2014 trustees made visits to all of the units with the exception of Rainsbrook which still had no mothers with babies. The sensory equipment which we had bought for Holloway was transferred to Styal.

Core work

Visits to the Mother and Baby Units have continued to be at the heart of our charity's work. The visits are a useful way for us to keep in touch with the units by talking to staff and the mothers, by observing some of the babies at their play activities and by finding out what developments there have been. The mothers often give us a positive impression of how they perceive the MBUs. For example, they have said: 'My baby has learned a lot here. It has been great'.

Core work cont'd

Another said staff had helped her get her little boy to sleep in his own bed instead of with her and she was going to put this into action with another child when she returned home. Sometimes we have seen external visitors providing input to a unit eg. music sessions. Requests for outings for the babies are supported where possible and reasonable and we have managed to fund other activities such as music sessions and outside trips.

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Other work

We have attended some meetings and courses (at no or little cost to BIP). All were relevant to our work and included topics such as Relationship and Parenting Support. We continue to liaise with other relevant organisations including Women In Prison and Action for Prisoners' and Offenders' Families, and we benefit from their newsletters.

Various people still approach us for information and assistance - students, journalists and film makers. Although we are happy to provide information on BIP, we always advise them that approaches for access to the Mother & Baby Units must be made via the Prison Service. We have recently sent a questionnaire to the Mother and Baby Units with the intention of finding out how we can continue to support them. We look forward to learning the views of the units.

Funding

We very much appreciate the support we have continued to receive from a group of loyal donors, including Mrs Rita Bourne's family, and Raye Wilkinson who both fundraises and arranges for a number of beautiful dolls to be knitted for the babies at Christmas. We also thank the Kingswood Methodist Wives Group for their generous donation.

Thanks

We thank Allen Lane for their generous grant to the charity which has helped greatly this year. We continue to appreciate the support of Mark Williams, our Treasurer, and we welcome Mike Startup, who has just completed his first independent examination of our accounts. We give special thanks to Gemma Hutchinson who completed a complex tax return HMRC insisted we complete even though it was a nil return.

How you can help

Your donations are very much welcomed to support our work for the babies. You can donate by cheque, via the Charities Aid Foundation or via JustTextGiving by texting your donation to 70070. If you are a tax payer, please consider completing a Gift Aid form which may be downloaded from the website. It really does make a difference to the work we are able to do.

At no cost to you, you can help when buying goods and services on the internet by visiting www.easyfundraising.org.uk and registering to benefit Babies in Prison as your chosen charity.