

# PFFS Services – The Swan Centre

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## **What is it?**

Once a week, PFFS has an “open house” when families can come and have lunch together and take part in a variety of activities and workshops.

## **When is it?**

Every Tuesday from 12.00 -3.00pm.

## **Where is it?**

At the PFFS offices at 20 Trinity Street, London SE1.

## **Who can come?**

The Swan Centre is for women who are affected by the imprisonment of a partner, relative or close friend. If you are able to travel to the PFFS office, you would be welcome to attend.

## **Does it cost anything?**

No. It is completely free of charge, and if necessary, we will refund your fares for travel to and from the centre.

## **What sort of activities are provided?**

The programme is varied. Some activities are purely social, such as bingo, outings to local places of interest, quizzes and Christmas parties. Others are self development workshops including a very popular series on coping with depression, self esteem and dealing with stress. There are sometimes guests from organisations such as the APVU or benefits agency who come to give information and give families a chance to comment on the services they provide. There are craft workshops where people can try their hands at candle making, T-shirt painting, glass painting, African drumming, photography or cake making. We try to include purely pampering activities in the programme sometimes as well – in the past our members have enjoyed manicures, haircuts, relaxation sessions, Indian head massage and Reiki.

## **Do I have to come to all of them?**

Come to whichever events interest you. You can come every week or only occasionally. It’s entirely up to you.

## **How do I find out what’s going on?**

We send out a programme three times a year to people who have expressed an interest in coming to the centre. This gives the dates and activities for the next 3 months or so. We also send out occasional mailings to remind people about special events. If you think you’d like to come, please call PFFS on 0808 808 3444 and ask to be kept informed about the Swan Centre programme and events.

## **Can I bring my children?**

Children are welcomed at the social events and informal craft workshops. We do ask that parents are responsible for any children they bring. There is no crèche and no qualified child minders to take care of them during the self development workshops, so we would advise not bringing children to those sessions. PFFS will help with childcare costs on these occasions, though is unfortunately not able to find a child minder for you.

## **I’m a bit nervous about meeting new people or going to new places on my own.**

We understand that it can be hard to pluck up the courage to attend for the first time. If you would like someone to meet you at the tube station or bus stop, this can be arranged. Or, if you would rather come earlier, say at 11.30, and meet the staff beforehand rather than walk into a room full of people, that can be arranged as well.

## **What can I expect when I arrive at the centre?**

Our Family Centre is laid out rather like someone’s living room with comfy chairs and coffee tables. It is not a

huge church hall or school assembly room. You will receive a warm welcome from the staff who will show you round and introduce you to the other women. There will be tea and coffee available and a light lunch, usually bread, cheese, ham, fruit and home made soup in the winter.

**Will I have to disclose things about the offence my partner committed?**

No. Swan Centre members are not encouraged to talk about offences and you do not have to disclose anything at all if you do not want to. Nothing you tell a member of staff about your situation will be passed on to anyone else without your permission.

**Can I get help filling in APVU or benefit forms when I come?**

Yes – you can make an appointment to see one of the staff privately before lunch to do this or to talk through any particular problems you are having.

**What will I gain from coming to the Swan Centre?**

Many of our members value the companionship of others in the same situation as themselves, and the supportive family atmosphere most of all. Some have made lasting friendships through coming to the centre.

We try and vary the programme as much as possible and include activities we think people will benefit from and enjoy. We hope that people will gain useful information and skills from the workshops, the chance to try and experience new things that are relaxing and fun, and strategies to help them cope with the stresses and strains people experience when someone they love is in prison.

**Can I make suggestions for items for the programme?**

Yes – we encourage the people who come to the Swan Centre to give us feedback and be involved in the planning of future programmes. We want the Swan Centre to be relevant and enjoyable for its members and welcome suggestions from them.

**I'm interested – what do I do now?**

If you would like to come to the Swan Centre, please call us on 0808 808 3444. We will answer any further questions you may have and take your contact details so we can inform you about the current programme and forthcoming events.