



Baby safe moved to allay fears

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WHILE the national lockdown has hindered Open Arms SA's plans to install two baby safes in the Durban CBD, the organisation, a project of Isiaiah 54 Children's Sanctuary, has relocated its baby safe in the Bluff.

The safe has been installed at Isiaiah 54's premises at 5 Vimy Road, Fynnlands and is now open and available for mothers to anonymously drop off their babies.

The safe was removed from the corner of Lighthouse and Bluff roads because it had become too dangerous for mothers to safely abandon their babies in the safe and for Isiaiah 54 to fetch the babies because of crime in the area.

Isiaiah 54 founder Glynnis Dauth said they haven't had babies left in the safe yet, but received calls from mothers wanting to come to the home.

"We've had a lot of moms asking about it. Now it's out of the way, it's more private. There's no cameras to watch them; no one can see them. They can just put the baby in and it alerts us," said Dauth.

Two new baby safes were to be installed on Dr Yusuf Dadoo (Grey) Street and a location near The Workshop shopping centre because they were close to universities.

Dauth said the installation of these safes was put on hold because of the onset of the Covid-19

pandemic.

She said the number of mothers looking for assistance and wanting to give their babies up had tripled because of the lockdown.

"Where we would normally have 20 to 25 a day, we're looking at 50 to 60 people a day. It's desperate out there. I'm sure we'll soon start having babies in the box because people don't have a way out," said Dauth.

Earlier this month, a baby boy was abandoned in Chatsworth.

The woman was later arrested and released on a warning.

University of Pretoria Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work and Criminology Reineth Prinsloo said the Covid-19 pandemic has led to more challenges, including an increase in abandoned babies and foetuses found in dustbins, dumps and ditches.

"Organisations anticipate an increase in abandoned babies during the lockdown period because of uncertainties and added emotional, social, and economic stress. Several NGOs have already received babies. With the lockdown regulations and people forced to live together in small spaces, reports of gender-based violence and rape are increasing," said Prinsloo.

Baby safes in KwaZulu-Natal can be found at Thandi House (Pietermaritzburg), The Domino Foundation (Durban North), Isiaiah 54 Children's Sanctuary (Bluff), Choices for Life: Impilo Baby Haven (eManzimboti) and Likhon iThemba Charity Hop Shop (Glenwood).



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