

Report on project for the Homeless Women's Hostel in Water Street, Carlisle.



Carlisle Soroptimists are now supporting the residents of the Homeless Women's Hostel in Water Street Carlisle

Sharon Sanders is the member of staff who is responsible for all co-ordinating and organising of donations and we've been in touch with her several times in recent weeks to find out how the hostel is run and find out what donations are most needed, both now and over the months ahead.

Sharon suggested we concentrate on long life food as a first priority and this photo shows the first supply before it was packed up and delivered.

The second delivery, scheduled for mid-December, will be much larger and make sure that no one goes hungry over the holiday period. The ladies have a kettle and fridge in their rooms, but no cooking facilities at all. Normally they share a large communal kitchen, where they have several cookers and microwaves. However, these are not normal times, and they are only allowed into the kitchen one at a time. This means that the cooking time for each is reduced to a bare minimum. The porridge and noodles which just need to have hot water added are a great way to have a hot meal and fill them up without having to queue for a turn in the kitchen. It made us all realise how lucky we are to be able to cook a hot meal whenever we want one.

I have established that our donations are used in emergencies only, until food can be sent to each person from the food bank and benefits may be claimed. The staff help with the claims for benefits. It was also interesting to hear that they don't need any sanitary products, since they always have a satisfactory stock.

In addition to the food, the next delivery will include toilet bags filled with basic necessities. There will also be gift boxes of toiletries for the ladies, selection boxes of chocolate for the older children and hand knitted teddies for the babies and toddlers. This will ensure that they all have at least one Christmas present.

The other thing we plan to do, once lockdown is over, is to donate used household items which can be given to the women once they are able to move into their own accommodation.

Jess Sinclair

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