



## Building communities (Southwark)

People who escape from abusive situations can arrive with literally nothing – no food, clothes, toiletries, and may have no immediate access to money. Mothers' Union members in Southwark diocese help by collecting a range of items that the families may need. Before starting to collect goods, it's helpful to first of all:

- Talk to your local clergy who will know the whereabouts of the local refuge and may be willing to make an initial contact. (For security reasons, locations of refuges are not made public).
- Establish what the specific needs are at a particular refuge, and then start collecting, giving guidance as to what is needed (see ideas below).
- If possible, appoint one member who the refuge staff are happy to liaise with, and, as trust is built, invite into the refuge to offer encouragement and support to the people staying there.



For general guidelines about setting up and developing outreach initiatives, go to the members' section of the Mothers' Union website [www.themothersunion.org](http://www.themothersunion.org)

## Possible items to collect

These are some items which may be appreciated by those staying at a refuge, but check first before starting a collection. (All toiletries and personal items should be brand new and in their original packaging).

- Sponge bags containing supplies of toiletries, deodorants, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc. All items should be **new** and in their original packets, or with seals unbroken. Sanitary wear is always needed.
- Underwear - ladies come in all shapes and sizes but **only** collect new items - bras, pants, tights are all needed.
- Luxuries like lipstick, nail polish, body lotion, perfume.
- Men can also suffer domestic abuse, and some refuge accommodation is available for them too. If the centre you are supporting offers accommodation to men, then razors (new, in sealed packets), shaving cream, deodorants for men are all acceptable.
- Towels, flannels and hand soap.
- Single duvet covers, sheets and pillowcases.
- Teenage boys may arrive with their mother and they also need toiletries. Razors, shaving cream, deodorants are all very acceptable.
- School uniforms in different sizes.
- When people arrive they need to cook for themselves so tinned and dried goods can be collected for a starter pack. Remember that different people at the same refuge will have varying tastes.
- When the families are ready to move on and look after themselves, there's an opportunity to give them starter packs for their new home, including items such as:

Dustpan and brush  
Broom  
Mop and bucket  
Kettle  
Set of cutlery  
Basic crockery  
Pots and pans  
Basic kitchen utensils  
Potato peeler  
Tin opener

Southwark Diocese aim to offer each child their own duvet cover and two toys to take to their new home.

## **A prayer for those who experience domestic abuse and those who support them practically**

Loving Lord, we pray for all those who are abused within their homes.

Give them the knowledge of your everlasting love and the courage to seek the help they need for themselves and their families.

May ours be the eyes that see the injustices around us,

May ours be the ears that hear the cries of your people,

May ours be the hands that work for transformation to bring about your kingdom here on earth.

Amen