



Corporate Toolkit

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About

The Shoebox Project for Women is an unaffiliated, non-religious, registered charity who celebrates diversity and inclusion.

Our Mission is to share empathy, kindness and compassion with local women impacted by homelessness through the collection and distribution of gift-filled Shoeboxes and messages of support.

Our Vision is a world where all women are seen, valued, and treated with dignity and compassion.



Who We Serve

We provide gifts & daily essentials to:

- Shelters serving: families, individuals who identify as women, transgender or non-binary; seniors; youth; refugees; adults living with disabilities; pregnant and parenting youth; among others
- Immigrant, refugee & newcomer welcome programs
- Community health centres
- Food & clothing banks
- Supportive & transitional housing programs
- Homeless outreach services and drop-ins
- Employment support services
- Mental health and addiction services

Why Women?

Did you know that?

- 60% of all homeless adults living temporary accommodation in England today are women, despite only making up 51% of the general population
- In the past decade, the number of homeless women living in temporary accommodation has almost doubled from 40,030 in 2011 to 75,410 today – a rise of 88%
- 69% of women who rent privately worry they wouldn't be able to afford anywhere decent to live if their relationship broke down – this equates to 2.7 million women.
- 1 in 38 lone mothers are homeless in England right now



* From Shelter.org.uk, 2021

Employee Gifting Opportunities



Workplace Shoebox Gift Drives Are:

- A **fun**, hands-on team building activity
- A **great way to engage employees**, whether they work at your head office or from home
- A **meaningful way to give back** to your local community
- **Easy to plan** and execute
- **Flexible**, can be tailored to suit any workplace environment, timeline, or budget
- A **non-denominational holiday activity** for staff of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs.



Virtual Giving and Hybrid Options

For those who prefer to give virtually, we have many opportunities for your team to give special and thoughtful gifts online.

- **Fundraise with your team** – We can set up a fundraising link unique to your team so you can track donations and match the total to make an even bigger impact.
- **Create Virtual Shoeboxes** – Employees can select as many items as they would like, and purchase a symbolic Shoebox for a local woman impacted by homelessness. Donors will receive a charitable receipt for their donation and the funds can be allocated to the community of their choice. Team members can even write a personal note to a Shoebox recipient.
- **Organize a Gift Card Drive** - Gift cards are one of the most coveted items by the agencies we support. Employees who do not wish to give monetarily can support your Shoebox Project initiative by donating a gift card of any denomination from a local business or a major chain, allowing local women in need to access the food, hygiene items and basic essentials they need.



Planning your Shoebox Drive

The beauty of a Shoebox

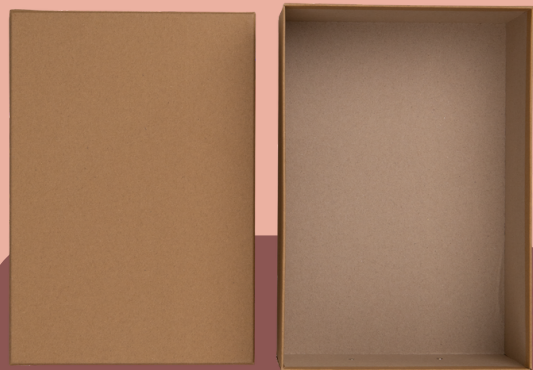
- ✓ Shoeboxes should be valued at approximately £40 and include new items only.
- ✓ Shoeboxes should only include items that you would love to receive yourself or feel good about gifting to a friend or loved one.
- ✓ Gifts should look as lovely and special as its recipient will feel when opening it.

The main objective of a Shoebox is to help its recipient feel special, worthy and cared for.

Appointing a Leader or Committee

We ask that one person (or a small committee for larger organizations) be responsible for overseeing the Shoebox Gift drive. This person will be The Shoebox Project's main contact at your organization and will be responsible for:

- Communicating the instructions to your group and organizing the gift drive
- Ensuring that the Shoeboxes collected meet our expectations in terms of quality and value, and do not contain any restricted or inappropriate items
- Connecting with your Shoebox Project representative to communicate final results and organize pick-up/delivery



Choosing the right Shoebox

- Use a standard-sized Shoebox or a decorative memory box of the same size (approximately 14"x8"x5"), to ensure all recipients get a gift similar in size and value.
- Avoid using a hinged lid box as the paper tends to rip easily.



Some important rules to follow

- The lid of your Shoeboxes must be wrapped separately from the bottom of the box.
- Do not seal your gifts.
- Ensure price tags are removed on all items.
- Use good quality wrapping paper and avoid using bows or ribbon. Boxes are usually stacked on top of one another and may undergo some wear and tear during transport.
- Ensure your Shoebox is well wrapped and that the paper has no rips or tears.
- Not great at wrapping? Use a decorative memory box from your local dollar store or craft store!
- Do not overstuff your boxes – the lids should fit securely and not pop off.
- Please follow closely the list of what items to include and what items to avoid.

How to Build the Perfect Shoebox

1

Shoeboxes should include basic hygiene items and essentials of daily living that would help someone feel more healthy, comfortable, and confident.

Each Shoebox should have these essential items:

- Shampoo & Conditioner (consider all hair types and textures)
- Body Wash
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Socks
- Chocolate/Candy (nut-free)



Shoeboxes should include little luxuries that allow women to feel beautiful, worthy and special.

2



Each Shoebox should also include these little luxuries:

- Cosmetics (lipstick, eyeliner, mascara, nail polish, etc.)
- A cosy accessory (hand warmers, hat, mitts, scarf)
- Skin care (sun cream, face cream, body/hand lotion, cleanser)
- Self-care (journal, facial mask, eye mask, lip balm)

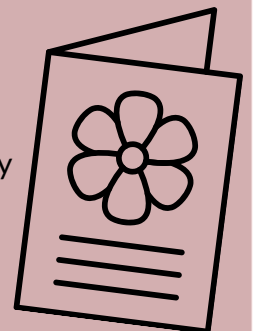
... to help a woman feel special!

3

The supportive messages included in our Shoeboxes is one of the most appreciated elements!

Each Shoebox should include a message or card. Keep in mind that:

- Your Shoebox could be going to someone of **any** economic and cultural background, religion, or age; please refrain from making any religious references.
- Every woman's circumstances that led them to seek shelter or support are different.
- A simple note to wish them well and to let them know that you're thinking of them can go a long way.



Inspecting Your Shoeboxes



We want our recipients to feel excited and uplifted by the beauty of their special gift!

If you are collecting donated Shoeboxes from your team, each gift will be slightly different. Your gifts will be particularly unique and personal, but this also adds an extra step:

your Shoebox drive Inspection!

Even with the best of intentions and clear instructions, you should expect that:

- Some Shoeboxes may need some extra products added; we recommend having some extra product on hand for this purpose.
- All Shoeboxes must be valued at approximately £40 and include NEW items only.
- Some Shoeboxes may need some items removed (see the list of prohibited items below).
- Some Shoeboxes may need to be wrapped, re-wrapped, or moved into a nicer gift box.



Inspecting your Donated Shoeboxes & Messages of Support:

- All restricted or inappropriate items must be removed from Shoeboxes (**see list to the right**).
- Useful items that are removed from the Shoeboxes such as sanitary products and jumbo-sized containers will be given to a shelter/agency in bulk as a separate donation. Please pack these items in a box and label it accordingly.
- Avoid including items that are overly delicate to avoid anything getting broken in transit.
- Shoeboxes must be valued at about £40, and must include a good variety of essentials and little luxuries (see full list on previous page).
- We encourage all donors to include a personal message or card with their Shoebox. If a Shoebox is donated without a card, please consider adding one.
- All of the contents, including the card, should be completely inclusive, as our Shoebox recipients come from diverse cultural, religious and economic backgrounds. Use “holiday season” instead of “Christmas” where possible.
- Do not include religious items, or cards that mention religious verses/phrases, prayers, etc.
- Do not include messages that make assumptions about the person’s circumstances. Some Shoebox recipients may be in crisis, but not all!

Items that Must be Removed from Shoeboxes:

- **Used goods, hotel samples/free samples** are not the type of items to make someone feel special and loved
- **Sized clothing** (i.e. S, M, L, XL) should not be included because beautiful women come in all different sizes
- **Mouthwash, toothpaste or hand-sanitizers** containing alcohol
- **Bubble bath or bath bombs**, as most shelters do not have bathtubs
- **Candles** (some agencies accept candles, but many do not)
- **Foundations or concealers** because each person has a unique skin tone
- **Razors** are restricted by some shelters
- **Jumbo-sized containers** do not fit well in a Shoebox
- **Books** are difficult to choose for someone you don't know
- **Feminine hygiene products** are essential items, but aren't considered a special treat; please put them aside and we will donate them separately.
- **Anything opened or not well-packaged**
- **Children's items**
- **Perfume or heavily-fragranced products**

Suggestions for Organizing Your Shoebox Gift Drive

The "Shopping List" Approach

This is a great way to make sure you have all the items you need for your Shoeboxes!

- Decide how many gifts you want to make, i.e. five Shoeboxes
- Designate the items you want each person to bring
- Each set of items per person, should total about £40

For example, say your department is making five boxes:

- Angela brings five bottles of hand lotion, five sticks of deodorant and five nice chocolate bars
- Muhammad brings five journals, five nice pens, and five pairs of socks
- Cora brings five nail polishes, five lip glosses or mascara, and five pairs of gloves
- Faith brings five body washes, five shampoos, five toothbrushes, and five toothpaste
- Everyone brings a note to put in their Shoebox



The "Collection Bin" Approach

- Leave one or more large decorative bins or boxes around the office and ask employees to bring in donations from your list of Shoebox items.
- Next to each collection box, have a display featuring the "perfect Shoebox".
- This will work to inspire your team, get them excited about building their own Shoebox, and demonstrate the types of items you're most looking for.
- When you gather to assemble your Shoeboxes, remember that you probably won't have all of the items you require, so you will need a good assortment of extra product on hand to supplement the items that were donated.

Consider showing one of our inspiring videos, to promote your Shoebox event, at a meeting and/or on your building's digital display board.

[Check out our YouTube Channel Here!](#)



The "Assembly Line" Approach

- If your company has a budget for this team-building event and you don't need your employees to contribute, simply purchase all of the supplies you need in advance of your event.
- Book a meeting room and invite management and co-workers to drop-in over the lunch hour to wrap, decorate, and assemble Shoeboxes.
- Include blank notecards and ask each team member to write a personal message or warm greeting to their Shoebox recipient.
- For the creative bunch, provide plain card stock and craft materials and have your team make special handmade greeting cards!

The "Fundraising" Approach

Are you interested in raising funds from your team in order to purchase all of your Shoebox supplies? Contact us, and we can help!

Frequently Asked Questions



Will I know which shelter/agency my company is supporting?

Not necessarily. This may depend on the time of year and location of your drive. Please let us know if you have a shelter in mind that you would like to support, and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

Can we deliver the Shoeboxes directly to the agency?

This is typically not possible during the busy festive season drive. If, however we know what shelter or agency you are supporting we may be able to make special arrangements for you to deliver them. An Agency Acknowledgement Form must be signed by the agency confirming the number of boxes they have received.

Some items have the price printed right on the label. Should we cover the price with marker or stickers or leave it as is?

Yes, you should cover the price when possible.

For items like the lip balm and hairbrush, should we remove the packaging to make it easier to pack in the box?

If possible, keep items in their original packaging so that they look new.

Should we individually wrap each item in our Shoebox?

Items should be placed unwrapped in your Shoebox as the contents may go through an inspection process at the shelter/agency.

Why can't I use a box with an attached lid?

It is challenging to wrap a box with an attached lid and the wrapping paper tears easily.

Can I use a boot box?

No. Boot boxes are not accepted as they are much bigger than the average shoebox and our aim is to create gift boxes that are equal in value.

Do I need to put tissue inside my Shoebox?

If you are using a clear plastic box please line it with unused, decorative tissue. If you are using a wrapped shoebox, it is not necessary to line your box but it can be nice!

If I am including a gift card in my box how much should it be for?

Any denomination is appreciated; however, we suggest £5.

Why are necessities like pads, tampons, and hotel samples on the "do not include" list?

The objective of a Shoebox is to make its recipient feel special and to boost self-worth. Although we recognize the importance of personal hygiene items, they take up a lot of space and we feel that they don't necessarily spark joy. If you'd like to donate these items, please keep them separate from your Shoeboxes and we'll make sure they get into the right hands.

Why are razors on the "do not include" list?

Some shelters house women who are at risk of injuring themselves. As we will not necessarily know ahead of time which shelter your boxes will be delivered to it is preferable not to include razors in your boxes. If you have razors, however, please put them in a separate box and we will deliver them to the shelter director to distribute.

What happens to our boxes once they are ready to go?

Once your Shoeboxes are ready, please reach out to your Shoebox contact and arrange for pick-up or delivery.

If we have leftover Shoebox contents, will the shelter/agency accept them?

Yes! Shelters have cupboards full of much needed supplies that the women can access.

Is there anything else that women living in Shelters need that won't fit in a Shoebox?

Yes! They are in desperate need of personal hygiene products.

Pads are preferable to tampons.



Resources

Resources & promotional materials, including photos, videos, flyers, logos, social media assets, and other corporate giving opportunities can be found in this Google Folder:

[Corporate Resources Folder](#)



Contact Us

 londonuk@shoeboxproject.com

 www.shoeboxproject.org.uk

 [@ShoeboxProject_uk](https://www.instagram.com/ShoeboxProject_uk)

Don't forget to share your Shoebox-making experience on social! Tag us and use the hashtag #ShoeboxProject!