



Cuddles

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Dear Cuddles Ladies

May I say to start with that I hope all of you have stayed safe during the recent months of lock-down and I thank you very much for your continued support of Cuddles. We have had quite a few new members join through the Facebook site, having found themselves with time on their hands, and all are welcome.

At the beginning of the lock-down I did email all the hospitals on our contact list to let them know we were still operational and we have supplied 12 hospitals with a variety of Cuddles items. All the feedback messages from the staff are at the end of the letter and shows you all how much they, and the parents they support, appreciate what you do.

The exciting news is that the East of England Ambulance Service and the South East Coast Ambulance Service have seen the quality of our Angel pockets with linings and have approached us to supply their ambulances in a brand new initiative to promote dignity and care to ladies who miscarry babies under 20 weeks.

Naturally we are excited and honoured to be part of this new venture.

Initially the East of England Service require 600, as soon as possible, and then approximately 100 each year. The South East Coast Service are looking for 350 as soon as possible, then 50 a year.

A pretty tall order but I am pleased to say that Cuddles has taken on the challenge. We would certainly appreciate your help but please be aware that the ambulance service has made some specific requirements as to how the pockets are made. These are the points they have stipulated:

Pocket size – 7” no bigger, in white or cream only please

Lined with thin cotton or cotton mix fabric – only white or cream

Ribbon for tying the pocket attached at both sides and tied at the front – in white and cream also please.

Kim Burt, who is ‘spearheading’ the project has added this advice:

The pockets need to be in a thin, drapey texture and she suggests you use bigger needles / hooks than you would normally use.

Different stitch patterns are lovely, but they must end up 7” square with matching triangle

Tension and yarn vary, and she suggests with 3ply use 3mm needles or 3.5mm crochet hook, and with 4ply use 3.75mm needle or 4mm hook as a guide, but please make sure the texture is very loose

Please don't use DK.

I have included a copy of the Pockets & Wraps pattern and the 'construction of pockets' as a reminder / help for you

Please remember, although these patterns say different sizes, we only want 7" square Angel pockets for the Ambulance service AND in white or cream only

There is a team of ladies who can put linings in for you, Kim, Fran and Karen. If you would like them to do this for you their addresses are:-

Kim Burt	Karen Booth	Fran Batt
19 Aspen Way	25 Green Acres	6 Park View
Tiverton	Peterborough	Cheapside
Devon	PE4 6LH	Ascot, Berks
EX16 6UJ		SL5 7QS

If you are able to help with either knitting or crocheting them please contact Kim Burt, she will be pleased to give you any advice you need and answer any questions you may have.

Eventually all the Angel pockets will come to me. I will slip a small Cuddles card into each pocket and store them until we can arrange delivery to central ambulance control, they have offered to collect them from my home which will help with delivery costs. When you have any finished pockets, please do send them to me at:

Battle Cross Cottage

Comp Lane

Offham

West Malling

Kent ME19 5PP

Once the pockets start rolling in, I will keep you updated with the numbers achieved.

This is quite an undertaking for Cuddles, and with us all working together I am sure we will be able to reach the numbers required and can be proud to support the ambulance crews and give the mothers and baby the care and dignity they need at such a terrible time.

In the meantime, we must not forget the hospitals that look to Cuddles for supplies. I thank you all for continuing to send in all the lovely items you knit and crochet and we have a wonderful variety of styles and range of sizes to offer. We don't get requests very often for the **cap**s and **Cuddles sleeping pockets** (the 'My Heart to Yours Hooded Sleeping Bag') but did this week. More of these two items and the **smaller Angel Wraps** would be very useful.

Copies of these patterns included for you too.

Another project that has been started by one of our ladies is to build up a 'lending library' of the items made. As she pointed out, seeing a picture of the finished items is fine but you don't get the sense of the size or finish of it. She is proposing to have, on hand, a collection of these items which any one can request, she will post it out and ask for it to be returned to her or passed on to the next person. It is in its early days of development, but I think it is very good idea.

The subject of funds is always a difficult one to broach and I am very grateful for a number of you who have sent in cash and cheques with your parcels to support us. We were lucky enough to be given £250 donation from the Maidstone Mayor's Charity Community Fund. My husband saw the article in our local paper inviting local charities and community groups to apply for a donation towards supporting their work. We filled in the application, feeling sure we would not be lucky enough to receive anything, but much to my surprise, we had an email saying we had been awarded £250!! Must keep an eye out next year in case they do the same thing again! wouldn't that be great.

What else can I say. These last few months have been quite a challenge for many and my heart goes out to all of you who have been in lock-down and shielding for your health sake. Thank you to all those who have joined Cuddles with a desire to help us in supporting the midwives and the families who have lost a precious baby by taking up knitting and crochet, maybe for the first time or returning to it. I am very privileged to see all the things you make at first hand and constantly overwhelmed by the amount of work you put into these lovely items and all the love and care that goes into making them.

Thank you all very much for the kind comments I receive. I enjoy what I can do for Cuddles very much but none of it would be of any use without the constant supply of much needed gowns and blankets, sleep suits and bunting, cribs and teddies, Angel pockets and wraps, the beautiful sets with matching items, the tiny hats and booties you send. I appreciate it very much and from the comments below you will see that the midwives do to.

With much love

Ann

Jenny Chrimes – St Thomas's

I just wanted to say thank you so much for the two boxes of beautiful things from Cuddles. We are so grateful. Thank you to your volunteers for supporting us with all these beautiful things. Our parents and staff really do value and love everything

Jane Husselbee – The Royal Wolverhampton

Thank you for all the work your organisation is doing, it is so helpful. The parcel arrived safely and is just what we needed. Many thanks

Zahra Famili – St Thomas's

Thank you so much for sending the lovely clothes; my colleague said you had sent a great many, thank you for your generosity

Sally Kelly – Chelsea & Westminster

Hope you are all keeping safe and well. We have missed you and your wonderful products.

The parcel arrived safely, thank you so much. The cribs look lovely in the little bags and I know the parents will love them.

Lauren Hutton – Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea

I have stocked up the gynae & labour wards with the beautiful items you have sent. They were incredibly well received by the staff and I know will mean so much to our parents. Thank you for your support.

Gemma Emmanuel – University College

Many thanks for the lovely selection of hats. They are much appreciated

Rachel Bond – United Lincolnshire

I just wanted to let you know we have received the baskets. They are lovely.

Thank you so much for your team's hard work and support.

Denise Kendall – East of England Ambulance Service

The Trust senior managers were super impressed at the quality of these products (Angel pockets)

And the dignity that this will provide parents and how much this will help staff who attend these incidents. They have been extremely well received an absolute credit to your group, well done.