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Grant refused, so shelter needs help

Help to make better rooms for homeless

AN appeal has gone out to help Colchester Night Shelter undergo major refurbishment after hopes of a Government grant to cover the cost were dashed.

The Alexandra Road shelter has already had some work done in the past six months, including two new kitchens, but after more than 20 years' service within the community the bedrooms and much of the rest of the facilities also need an overhaul.

However, work on the bedrooms, planned for the start of the year, was delayed in the hope a Government grant could be secured, said shelter co-ordinator Pernille Petersen.

Now staff are having to regroup after the bid failed and they are appealing, while

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applying for smaller grants and trust funds, for people to help out with the cash needed by coming forward with fundraising ideas.

Mrs Petersen, who has run the shelter for the past 17 years, said more than £50,000 is still needed.

"We are hoping to start work on the first bedroom in the next two to three weeks, but all 13 bedrooms need doing. They need doing properly with new curtains and things like that.

"We were very disappointed to miss out on the Government grant. We think it was because we are not a dormitory-run shelter like the one in Cambridge, which is getting

money for its refurbishment. The charity Emmaus did not get a grant either.

"We still want to get the work done, and would appeal for any help we can get," she said.

Each room will cost about £2,000 because new furniture is also needed, she added.

The laundry also needs urgent attention and could cost twice as much as the bedrooms to bring up to scratch.

"We need an extra dryer and some of the machines have been there since we opened almost 20 years ago," she said.

Guests are also to be consulted on what they would like to see done to improve facilities at the shelter.

She urged people to get in touch if they have any fundraising ideas, or would like to arrange an event on 01206 549885.