



Unit 19 Environmental and social issues

Task 06

Announcer: Listen to Paul and Mary talking about the young woman on the street.

Mary: Oh (*sigh*) I am sick of shopping now! These bags are so heavy and my feet are killing me!

Paul: Yeah, let's go home! ... Oh no – here we go again!

Young woman: Spare any change, sir, for the homeless?

Paul: (*rude*) No, I'm sorry.

Mary: Wait a minute! ... Here you are.

Young woman: Cheers, love. Have a nice day.

Paul: You mustn't give those youngsters any money, Mary.

Mary: Why not? I think we should help people who can't help themselves. It must be horrible living on the streets. Especially when it is so cold and wet!

Paul: If they are homeless it is because they want to be. There are plenty of hostels and places they can stay. I feel sorry for the dog!

Mary: Oh, what would you think if you had no money and saw people like us with loads of shopping bags walking past all day ... ignoring you? How would you feel?

Paul: They get plenty of money from the government!

Mary: Oh really?

Paul: Yes, they spend the money they get from begging on drugs and alcohol. That's the only reason they ask for more. And mugs like you give it to them.

Mary: I don't think it is that simple, Paul. Many homeless youths have mental or physical health problems. Some have no parents or relatives able or willing to help. Sometimes abuse and domestic violence drives these youths away from home. Some, you are right, have drug and alcohol problems in combination with unemployment. They often have the dogs to keep them warm and to have company. Anyway, living that kind of life ... it must be very hard to get out of it again.



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- Paul: She was only – what – about 20 probably and she looked perfectly fit and healthy to me. She could get a job any day if she wanted. When I was her age I had a job. I was working for my money, not begging for it. People like her – they can easily get a job if they wanted one. The fact is ... they know they are going to have a perfectly cushy life because of the government and people like you.
- Mary: Cushy? I wouldn't call that kind of life cushy! Whatever the reason for it – people that beg on the streets have a hard life. Anyway, I don't like talking about this kind of thing. Let's just forget it.