

2021 Impact Report

Little Village



How Little Village works

Introduction

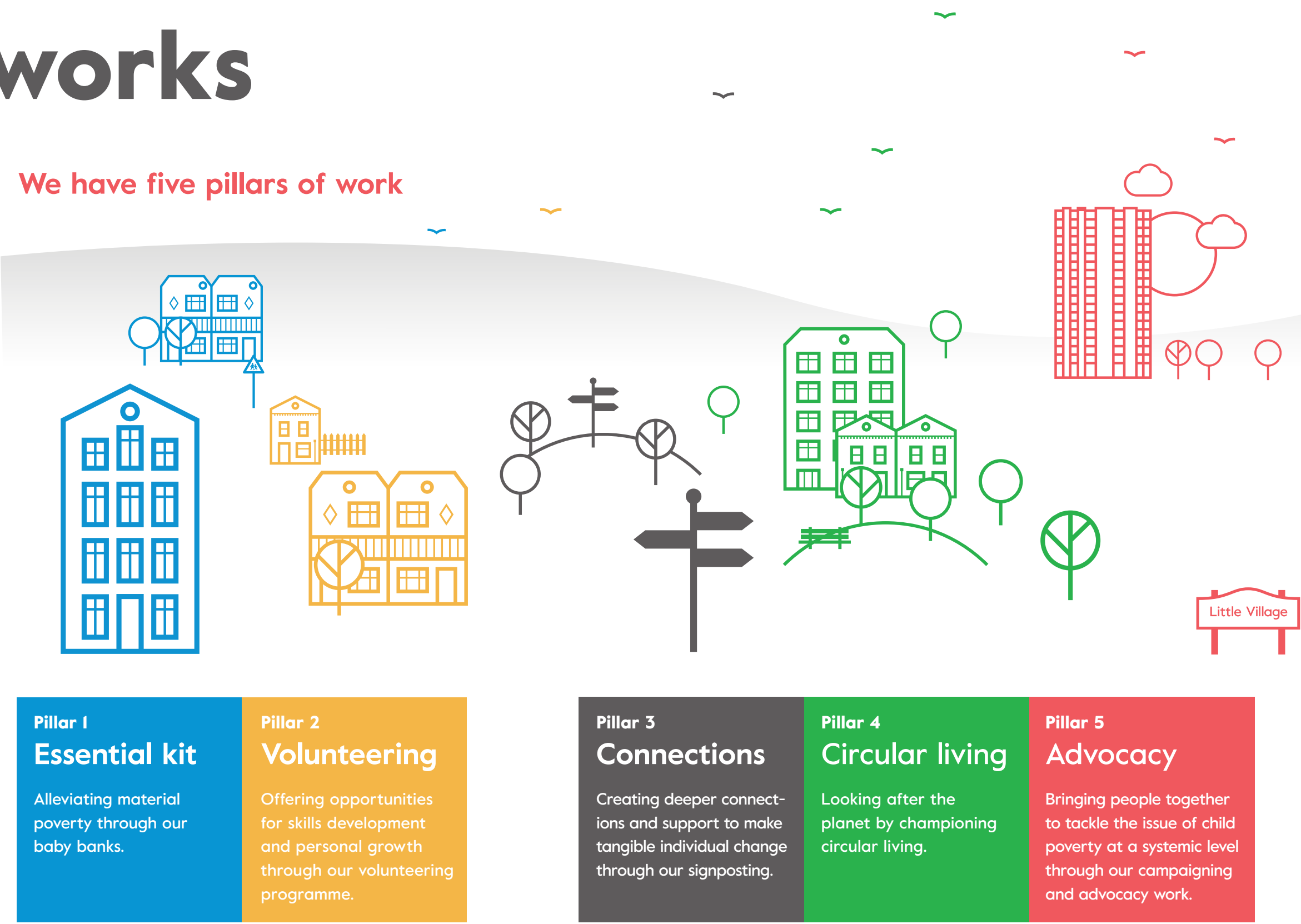
Our vision, to create thriving communities where families share their preloved kit and every child under 5 has the essential items they need, has never felt more vital. As the cost of living crisis, on top of the impact of Covid, is felt by families across the capital, we are seeing demand for our services continue to rise.

We measure the outputs and impact of our work across all of our activities. We use these insights to ensure that the work we do on a daily basis is meeting our families' needs and is starting to make lasting change in the landscape of child poverty.

This report tells the story of our work across our five pillars of activity (see right).

We're proud of the impact we've made in all of these areas, but are aware of the huge level of need that continues across London. We will use the learnings from this report to guide our growth as we seek to support more families and make a greater impact in campaigning to change the system that traps families in poverty.

We have five pillars of work



Pillar 1 Essential kit

Alleviating material poverty through our baby banks.

Pillar 2 Volunteering

Offering opportunities for skills development and personal growth through our volunteering programme.

Pillar 3 Connections

Creating deeper connections and support to make tangible individual change through our signposting.

Pillar 4 Circular living

Looking after the planet by championing circular living.

Pillar 5 Advocacy

Bringing people together to tackle the issue of child poverty at a systemic level through our campaigning and advocacy work.

Pillar 1

Essential kit

What are the impacts of material poverty on children in London?

700,000 children live in poverty in London - 43% of all children in inner London, and 34% in outer London.¹

This rises to 53% of children in some boroughs, notably those boroughs with a high proportion of BAME families who are more likely to be low paid. 70% of children growing up in Bangladeshi families in London are growing up in poverty. Those families with a disabled child also face a higher level of poverty.

Children in London live in deeper poverty than others in the UK with average household income at 66% of the poverty line; soaring rents are a significant contributor to the higher rates of poverty in London than in other areas of the UK.

The impact of this level of poverty affects children directly, and indirectly through the impact on parents.

- 1. Children living in poverty have worse health outcomes. People living in the most deprived 10% of areas will die nine years younger than those in the richest 10% and these effects are seen in early childhood with young children in

overcrowded inadequate housing more likely to contract meningitis or experience respiratory difficulties, and are four times more likely to develop a mental health problem by the time they are 11.²

- 2. Children living in poverty have lower educational outcomes. Even by the age of three, research shows significant differences between cognitive development in children growing up in the poorest homes than those in the wealthiest. These differences widen further by the age of five and continue throughout school with less than a quarter of children on free school meals attaining five good GCSEs, compared to over half of their peers not on free school meals.³ These differences in the early years are attributed to differences in the home learning environment, parental engagement with children, and the health and wellbeing of parents, which are all factors caused or heightened by the impact of living in poverty.⁴

- 3. Children whose parents experience poverty in pregnancy are nine times more likely to face additional traumatic experiences than their wealthier peers.⁵ This includes adverse childhood experiences such as sexual abuse, coping with parental separation, or their parents dealing with ill health, drug or alcohol abuse. These early and adverse childhood experiences have a lasting impact on future outcomes.

- 4. Women in low-income households are more likely to suffer from post-natal depression – likely exacerbated by the major life event of childbirth compounding the day to day stressors of living on a low income.⁶ Children growing up in families with postnatal depression are not as securely attached to their mothers, and often show behavioural difficulties.⁷
- 5. Children living in poverty have weaker relationships with their care givers due to the presence of family stress.⁸ The emotional distress and situational stress caused by living on a low income stops parents having a full and healthy relationship with their children, which in turn has an adverse impact on child development and behaviour.

How does Little Village Alleviate the Impact of Material Poverty?

Our baby banks operations deliver a number of outputs:

- 1. We provide essential clothing and kit for children under the age of five.
- 2. We use in-person and phone consultations to ensure parents are able to express their needs and emotions.
- 3. Services are delivered with an ethos of love and solidarity.
- 4. We re-use second hand items to reduce the environmental impact of childhood and increase parental self sufficiency.

In 2021...



We answered **4,862** requests for support, covering **6,483** children in **4,042** families.



We provided over **1,659** beds and **721** buggies, along with over **6,700** packs of nappies.



We passed on over **9,000** packs of clothes, **2,423** coats and over **3,000** pairs of shoes.

Included in these numbers are **800** emergency packs for Afghan children who arrived in the UK as part of the ARAP resettlement scheme.

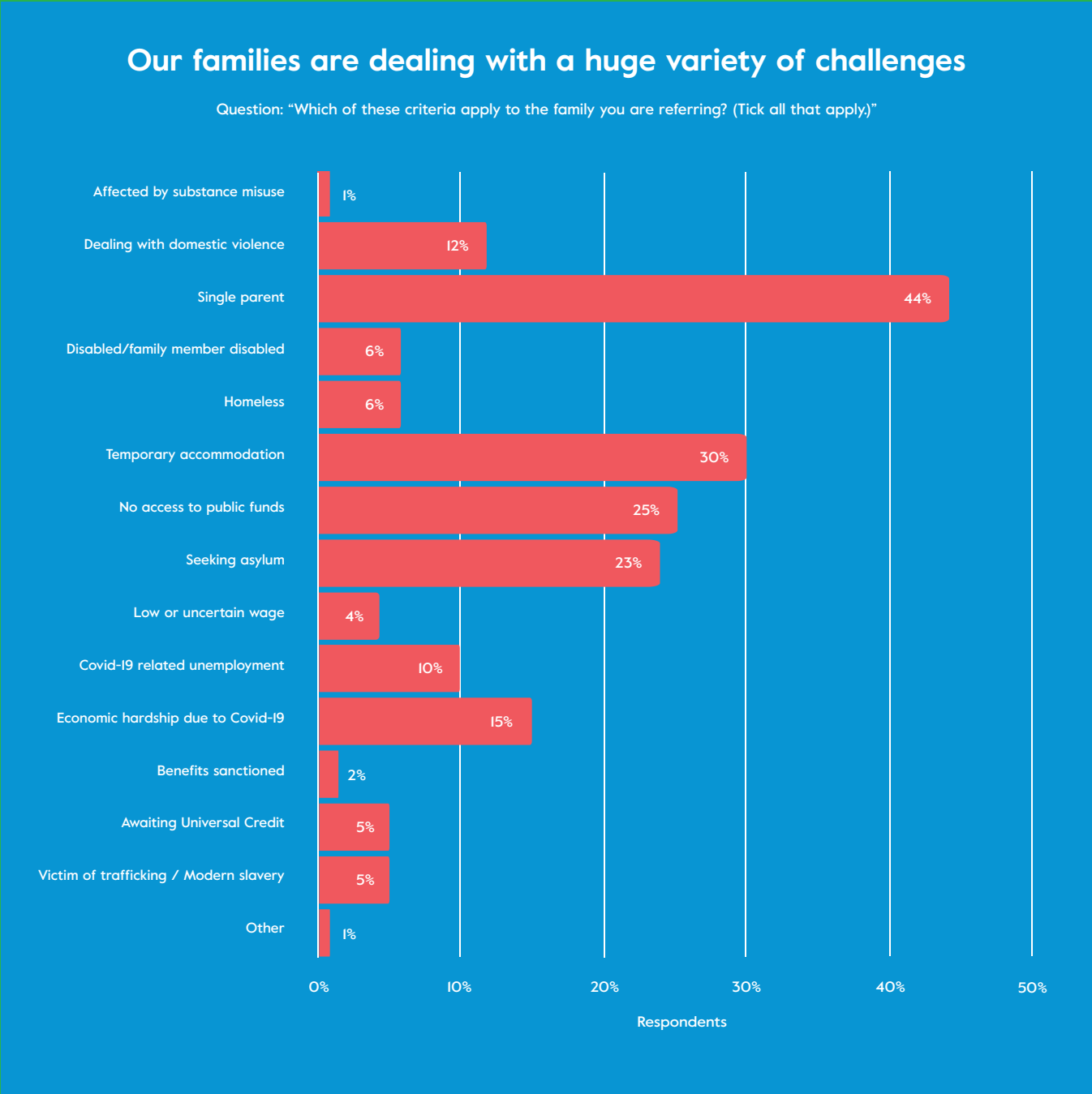
If valued as new, this represents over **£2.2m** worth of clothing and essential baby kit.

Where do our families live, and what challenges do they face?



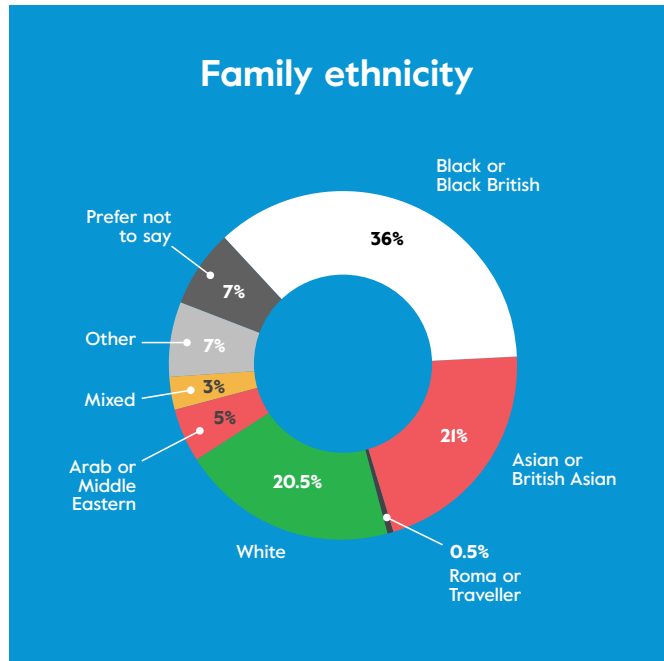
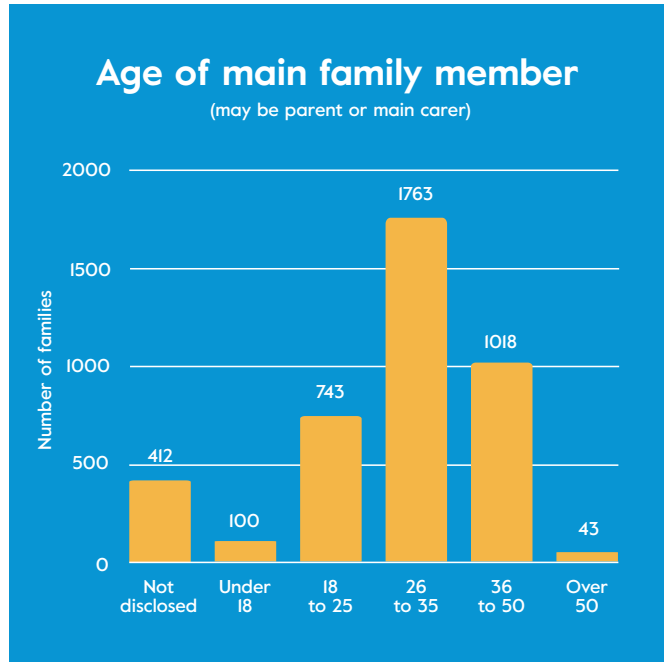
Boroughs of residence

The size of each borough's red circle represents the number of people supported by Little Village.



These figures represent the main reason for referral as listed by the referral partner. In reality, most of our families are dealing with many of these challenges concurrently.

When we conducted our survey, in fact 30% of families reported they were claiming or awaiting the outcome of a Universal Credit claim.



Measuring Outcomes for Families

Beyond the outputs of our service, we seek to understand the wider outcomes for families of this work and to understand which if any of these poverty impacts Little Village delivers outcomes against.

Methodology

Primary research was conducted with families supported during 2021. The initial survey was based on prior research (Social Engine) and ratified through an initial qualitative focus group, with amendments made based on learnings and observations.

The quantitative survey was translated into key languages using an external translation agency to enable access.

The results were analysed to compare the profile of respondents to the profile of families supported across the year in terms of reasons for referral, number of children, ethnicity, language spoken. Those responding to the survey were found to closely match the socio-demographic profiles of those we had supported throughout the year as reflected in our tracking of all referrals.

In addition, referral partners were surveyed in December 2021, and those who had donated kit were surveyed in January 2022.

Results: Outcomes of Little Village’s work

Based on the results of the qualitative survey and the quantitative focus groups, it is

| | Families reporting inadequate provision prior to support | Families reporting good provision prior to support | Families reporting good provision after support |
|--|--|--|---|
| Safe place to sleep | 38% | 55% | 66% |
| Ways to transport children | 42% | 46% | 55% |
| Ways to feed safely | 42% | 49% | 63% |
| Clothing | 52% | 12% | 67% |
| Warm coat / shoes for outdoor use | 56% | 35% | 59% |
| Clean space to put child or play in (eg bouncy chair, playmat) | 48% | 40% | 56% |
| Stimulating toys & books | 48% | 43% | 62% |

possible to identify three significant outcomes for families from Little Village’s activity.

1) Meeting of primary needs including safety and physiological needs, so improving immediate health situations.

Provision of baby kit and clothing allows families to meet children’s primary needs of safety, wellbeing and development.

Prior to support, families report having inadequate provision of key items relating to child safety and wellbeing.

We have long viewed beds to be an essential item for children. Co-sleeping with a newborn is often not recommended by health professionals and should only be done carefully with consideration for the safety of the baby.⁹ For many of our families, though, this is a necessity.

“I would have had nowhere to put the baby when I came home from the hospital.”

“I only have a single bed so I would have slept on the floor and given the baby my bed.”

A moses basket or crib ensures that babies have a safe space in which to breathe with no risk of crushing or suffocation, or falling off.

| Families were able to report on the direct impact kit had had on their family | |
|---|-----|
| Helped my children be warm and dry | 72% |
| Helped my children be stimulated and educated | 51% |
| Helped us all get sleep and rest | 34% |

With older children, sleep can be heavily disrupted when sharing a bed:

"He is a six out of ten as a wriggler!... we all sleep better now (he has his own bed)."

Suitable clothing can be a particular challenge for families, ensuring children are warm and dry.

"We had come from a warmer climate so my son was always cold, his nose was dripping. We were not used to the cold."

"I'm worrying about how we can all keep warm this winter especially at night. My son has my fleece on and his blanket to keep him warm."

Items such as high chairs enable children to develop healthy habits around food.

"I put her in her car seat and I used to feed her just one item at a time. Now she's got the high chair I put food on the tray and she's using her hands and chooses different things. She's eating better. The health visitor said that was better."

49% of families surveyed reported that they would not have been able to buy these core items for their children if they had not had support from Little Village. And even if they had been able to afford a version of them, there was concern about the quality of items they can afford.

"I looked at the high chairs but I just thought they'd break with my big boy. The one I got from you will last years and we use it all the time."

Provision of these items also had a corollary impact on parental ability to meet other essential needs in the home by removing difficult choices about budgeting.

- 38% reported that if they had had to purchase the items themselves, they would have struggled to pay basic essentials such as food and bills.
- 44% reported that they were able to purchase other items their family needed because baby kit had been provided by Little Village.
- 38% said they would have had to cut back in other areas if they had had to purchase the items Little Village provided.

This is particularly of benefit to families dealing with a transition to benefits as a result of their pregnancy. One referral partner reported that "essential health (hygiene) packs have helped during process of assessment for Universal Credit."

"My midwife said I couldn't work because of pre-eclampsia, but I said, no, I need to work...It wasn't a planned pregnancy."

For many of our referral partners, this provision of essential items is a key accompaniment to their wider work supporting families, one that they would not know how to access if Little Village weren't operating.

- 91% of partners report that Little Village provides items essential for child safety.

- 66% report that the kit provided contributed to child development.
- 86% say Little Village provides items that they wouldn't know how to source elsewhere.
- 52% would not know where else to source essential child and baby kit.

"Little Village helps parents feel they can adequately provide for their children." – Referral partner

2) Meeting of secondary needs of socialisation and mobility, reducing isolation and improving access to essential services.

"Without the buggy that works, we can't get out. We'd go to the children's centre (if we could)."

"My son haven't [sic] gone to nursery all term because we can't use the buggy."

"Since the buggy broke, I've stopped going out without my partner. We're basically housebound."

Appropriate baby kit is a gateway to other services. A buggy provides the ability to get to nursery for a two year old child accessing their funded 16 hours, designed to help level up educational attainment for disadvantaged children. It enables children to socialise with others, essential to developing core life skills, and even more pressing as society opens up for the first time for those babies born during Covid

lockdowns. A buggy enables parents to reach essential medical appointments, to reach parks for exercise and to run off energy, and for otherwise isolated parents to socialise, improving mental health and support networks.

- 28% of families said their child was now able to access nursery or a children's centre because of support from Little Village.
- 51% said that items provided stimulus and the means to educate their children.

"My son's speech is delayed. Now he picks up a book and starts reading and saying the words. It's made a real difference."

Developmental tools can be even more important for families with a child with additional needs. Over 6% of families referred to Little Village have a family member with a disability, and the increased costs of supporting additional needs mean that 41% of children living in a family with a disabled family member are living in poverty.

"My daughter, she needs sensory toys. They're hard to find. She doesn't play like a normal kid. She looks into the light and she gets really happy."

3) Providing a sense of solidarity and support

"As women, as mothers, we are made to feel that we should be able to cope with whatever resources are in front of us."

And if the resources are not there or not available, we've failed as mothers...The stigma needs to stop because it stops people from reaching out for help."

The fear and anxiety felt by parents who feel unable to provide practically for their children is huge. A key aspect to the Little Village programme is not just what kit is provided, but how it is provided. This ethos is designed to deliver solidarity and love to parents who may be feeling isolated, vulnerable, unseen and unsupported. Following support from Little Village, 54% of families reported feeling that someone was on their side.

A number of different factors deliver these emotional elements of the support:

a) The interactions with the Little Village staff and volunteer team, in particular the phone call pre- or post-delivery of kit used to provide emotional connection as well as check the practical items required. This interaction is delivered with empathy and a value of love which provides solidarity and a sense that "someone is on your side". This is of particular importance to parents who have limited social contact, and new parents who were unsure what items they needed.

"When you're in financial difficulties, it can make you feel like a really bad mum, or like you're not doing the job you're supposed to do. So when someone kind of makes you feel okay about the fact that you may not have something, it can bring up a lot of feelings of gratitude and warmth."

"It made me feel like I can count on someone."

"You heard me; I felt listened to for the first time."

b) The quality of items provided affords dignity. Parents referenced that the quality of items provided was of a higher level than they would have been able to source themselves if they had purchased them. This gave a sense of dignity and self-respect which might otherwise have not been there when having to rely on charity or second-hand items.

c) The way items are presented, conveying respect. When interviewed, parents noted the way that items were clean, pressed and packed carefully, with attention to detail. This was taken as a sign of love and support, providing comfort that someone cared.

"I just saw the love and the quality of the clothes...They were neatly ironed, neatly folded, the duvet and some sheets (arrived) just in the nick of time... I was able to use things immediately... You just came and sorted me out, it's like you saw inside me, you knew what I wanted. And that was how I was able to survive."

Delivering these values of solidarity and love provide an emotional cushion for parents at a time of intense vulnerability.

"(Little Village) has a huge effect on parental self-esteem." – Referral partner

Summary

77% of families state that their overall situation has improved in the months following support from Little Village, with 66% of respondents citing the support from Little Village as the key factor in this change. (For those families who stated their situation had worsened, cost of living was cited as the most significant impact).

Prior to support from Little Village, families report high levels of negative emotions. Only 36% of respondents were able to express excitement about their child or new baby.

"I felt like I didn't want to be here anymore. I wouldn't be a very good mother, they wouldn't have a very good life. And that's quite a difficult reality to face."

"I was in a very, very, extremely dark place...you know, you feel you have suicidal thoughts in you. What is the baby going to come into? When it comes, there will be nothing."

"There's no mother who will (be OK) seeing their children not looking too good or not sleeping on good things. There's no way you can hide that feeling and...it can lead to mental disorder, suicidal thoughts, you know?"

"Yeah, the rest of the rest can be what it is. But you've dealt with the most important one."

"You have two or three challenges in front of you. And the baby stuff happens

| Emotions prior to support from Little Village | |
|---|-----|
| Anxious about how I was going to support my child | 38% |
| Worried about my child's future | 42% |
| Scared for myself and my child | 42% |
| Hopeless | 52% |
| In a bad place with my mental health | 56% |
| Feeling like I was a bad mum | 48% |
| Worried that social services or another agency would feel that I wasn't looking after my child well | 48% |
| Respondents could choose multiple options. | |

| Following support we see a significant shift in positive feelings. | |
|---|-----|
| My worry has been reduced | 59% |
| Allowed me to feel proud seeing my child in new clothes or using new kit and toys | 53% |
| Gave me 'head space' to think about other things | 45% |
| Helped me feel more confident as a parent | 46% |
| Helped me feel more able to cope with change in the future | 30% |

to be your number one priority. And then (that gets sorted), know then you have enough time to like for me like, think, my mental, my emotional challenge.”

“Little Village made me feel very proud and stress free. And the baby stuff happens to be your number one priority. And then (that gets sorted) ... then you have enough time to ... think, my mental, my emotional challenge.”

When asked to rank which aspect of Little Village’s support was the most important, respondents were split:

- 33% cited the practical impact of the kit provided.
- 30% cited the emotional impact of the kit provided.
- 28% cited the emotional support and solidarity.

It is clear that it is a combination of both the nature of the items that are provided, along with the way in which the items were provided that has a positive impact on parents.

“Helping with the small things has a big impact to helping me sort out bigger things myself.”

By removing the anxiety that comes with not being able to provide material items, we both create head space and free up other resources to handle other challenges parents face. By doing this with an ethos of love and solidarity, we create a space



where parents feel supported and more secure in their position. In doing both of these tasks, we give parents permission to feel like parents, to embrace the enormously important task that is raising a child.

We can align these impacts to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.¹⁰

At a basic level, the provision of essential baby kit and clothing meets children’s physiological and safety needs.

This same kit then enables the social needs of children and their parents to be met by widening access and reducing isolation.

These practical aspects, coupled with the emotional benefits of solidarity and love build esteem and allow parents to thrive – in effect to self-actualise in their role as a parent.

“Once you feel that you’ve thought that you can provide for your children, then that is a huge weight off your mind mentally as a woman to be able to say, okay, you know what, everything else has gone wrong, but at least I can provide for my children. And that’s very powerful. Very powerful.”

Whilst we are unable to deduce longitudinal impacts about our work, as we do not have long-term engagement with our families, who are also living in complex environments with many factors affecting their overall situation and their ability to raise their family out of poverty, we can draw some reasonable conclusions about the impact of Little Village’s work on the effects of poverty on children in the introduction to this report.

- 1) By meeting safety and physiological needs, we support better health outcomes in the early years.
- 2) By providing items which support stimulus in the home, and support accessing nursery and centres out of the home, we support better education development and outcomes.
- 3) By providing material support and emotional solidarity, we help parents to face other challenges, which may in turn reduce the impact or occurrence of other adverse childhood experiences.
- 4) By supporting mothers to positively face parenthood, and to access services outside of the home, we may support reduction in post-natal depression and a broader improvement in mental health.

5) By reducing stress and anxiety we empower parents to feel like they are capable of being ‘good’ parents, and increase positive bonds and attachment between parent and child.

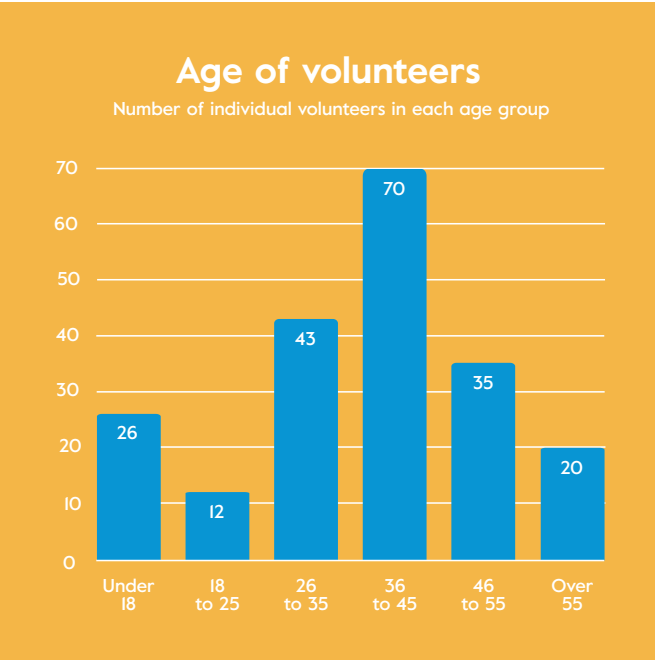
“The emotional support from Little Village is as if not more important than the practical side of it as well. Because if you’re not okay, emotionally, mentally as a mother, then the nappies and blankets and everything else it doesn’t (matter), you know what I mean. It kind of goes hand in hand. You have to be okay first, and I think Little Village had a big part to play in that as well.”

Pillar 2

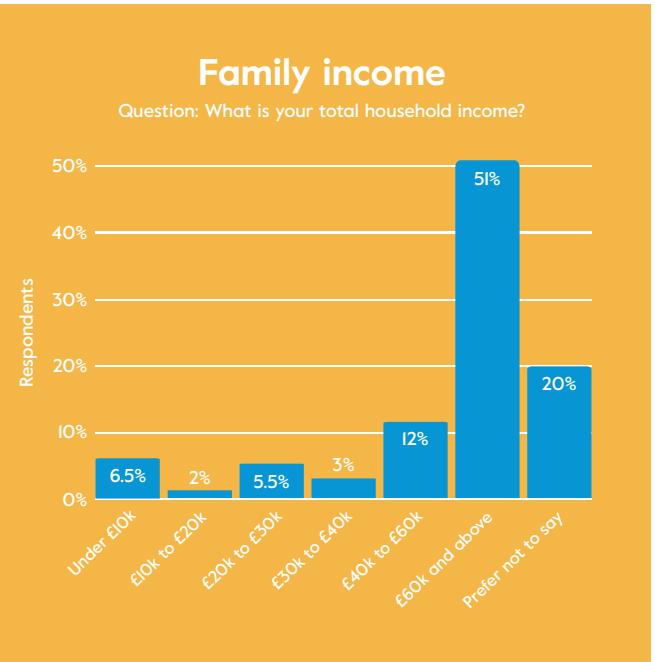
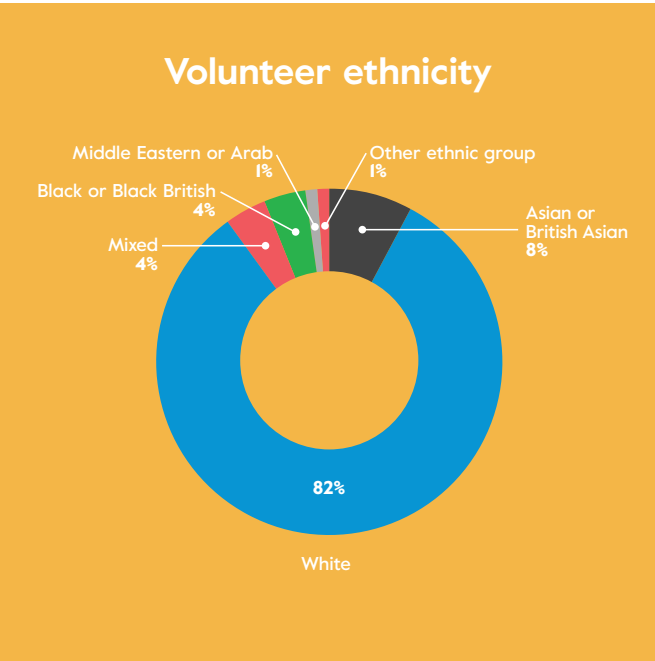
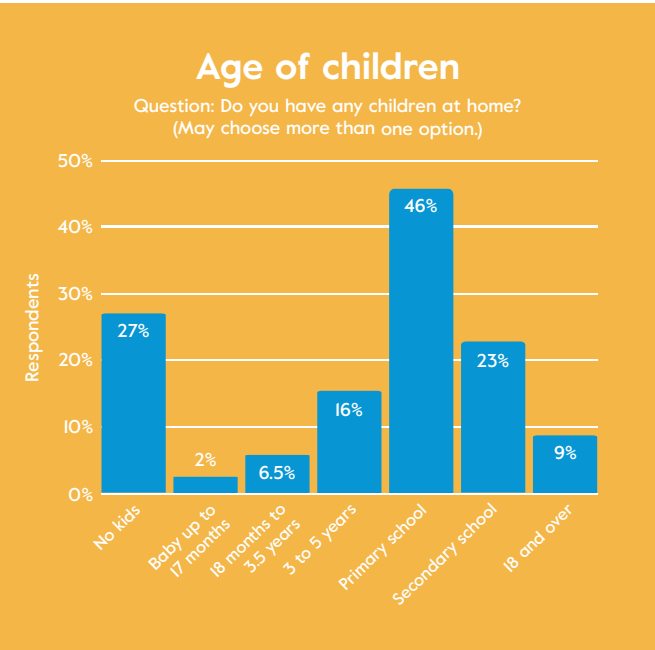
Volunteering

In 2021 Little Village benefited from 17,135 hours of volunteer time given by 629 volunteers (active volunteers, defined as someone who did at least one 2 hour shift during the year). Our volunteers come as individuals, in family groups, and as corporate teams.

Our **individual volunteers** are a broad group:



Eleven of our volunteers are from families we have supported. This figure is far lower than we are aiming for and something that has been affected by our ability to offer crèche facilities to volunteers during Covid.



Our volunteers don't just come on their own; many bring **family members** with them. NCVO research¹¹ demonstrated how volunteer as a family group can:

- strengthen family ties;
- enable families to spend meaningful, fun time together;
- help individual members of the family find an identity within the family group;
- create new family-level social relationships;
- educate and broaden horizons beyond the core family experience.

Little Village has five regular groups volunteering together who represent different members of the same family; these may be couples, adults bringing their parents, or parents bringing the children. We often see regular volunteers bringing family

members along for ad hoc sessions when visiting; it is positive to see that volunteers see this as something they want to share.

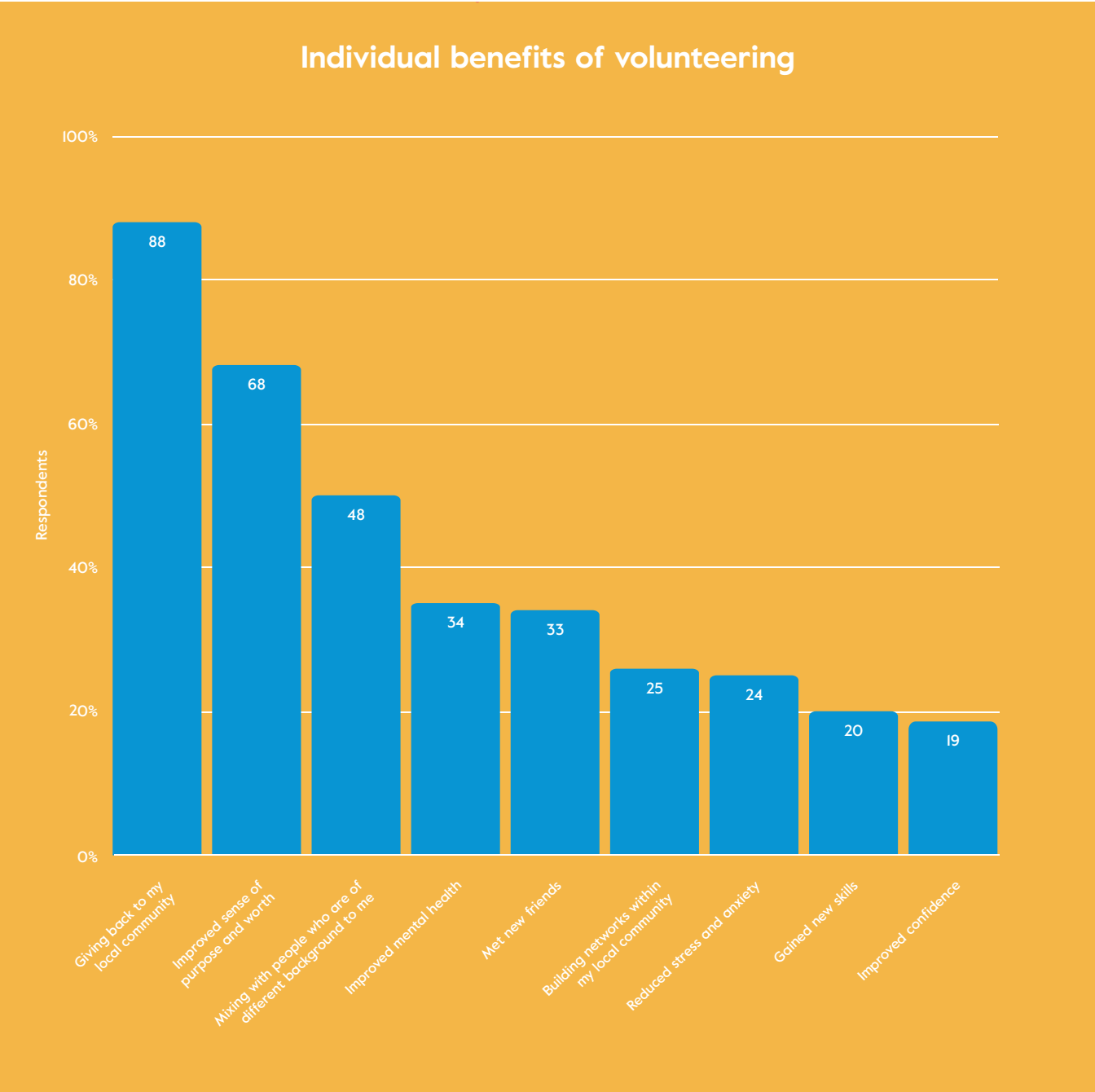
We welcome a number of **young volunteers**, most of whom are working towards Duke of Edinburgh awards. In 2021 we supported 16 DofE volunteers (12 at the Bronze level, one at Silver and three at Gold level).

We also support **corporate groups** on team building and community 'give-back' days. Levels of corporate volunteering have dropped significantly during lockdowns, but as restrictions loosened many companies were keen to reunite teams who had been working from home and not seen each other for many months. In 2021 we welcomed nine groups, totalling 66 individual volunteers (these volunteers are not counted in our regular tally of volunteers detailed above).

Feedback from these groups shows us that corporate volunteering:

- provides opportunities for teams to get to know each other outside of the speed of the normal working day;
- provides opportunities to test skills such as creative thinking and problem solving in unusual situations;
- gives teams wider perspective on the relatively narrow nature of the communities they engage with during their working lives.

"It was truly eye opening, reading some of the stats, facts and stories were shocking. It made me think about the faces behind the donations." – Corporate volunteer



Pillar 3

Connections

As part of our mission to drive longer term change for our families, we offer a basic signposting service. This recognises the complex challenges our families are facing and the need for deeper support to make meaningful change in their situations. Our ‘family liaison’ team call each family to discuss their practical needs, offer solidarity and a listening ear and are also trained to signpost on to community services where appropriate.

In 2021, we provided signposting resources to 274 families.

These included:

- 33 food bank referrals providing immediate food relief for families unable to feed themselves that week;
- 20 full referrals into Citizen’s Advice for higher level support with complex issues;
- 105 referrals to Migrant Help and Happy Baby Community, who provide tailored support for migrants and refugees;
- 5 applications for Healthy Start Vouchers which provide access to milk and fresh vegetables for families with young children struggling with food costs;

- And numerous signposts into local children’s services, specialist community groups and charities, linking families to support in their local areas.

We are delighted to be expanding this programme in 2022 with funding from the Mayor of London to offer a broader and deeper service to more families in partnership with the Money and Pensions Service. This has already led to a steep increase in the number of families being supported following the launch in November 2021.

Pillar 4

Circular living

We champion circular living. If families no longer needed to access Little Village because of the impacts of poverty, we would still choose to exist as a means for families to live within the circular economy, encouraging re-use and recycling for the environmental benefit of these behaviours..

We track the environmental impact of our work against three metrics:

- 1) Changing attitudes to using second hand making it more acceptable.
- 2) Increasing re-use / recycling as a method for disposal of unwanted goods.

3) The direct environmental impact of the reduction in greenhouse gasses as a result of products re-used throughout our network instead of going to landfill.

I) Changing Attitudes

We measure this with three key audiences: the families we support; our referral partners who have huge influence over the families they work with; our donors who kindly give their items to us for re-use.

By demonstrating that second-hand clothing and kit can be suitable in terms of quality and fit for purpose, we drive acceptance of, and willingness to seek out, second hand items by families themselves.

55% of families said that their delivery from Little Village made them more open to using second hand in future for their children.

“This has literally taught me that you can actually go to charity shop and get something nice...it has really given me that new orientation.”

Quality is critical in driving perceptions of second-hand items and their appropriateness for use with children.

“I went to a get together on Sunday... for my son... and they were asking me how do you get all this, your tops for your son, this quality, people are saying, when there is no money!”

“Even though they’re second hand, they’re better quality than I’d get anyway.”

Through this work, we increase our families’ ability to source items themselves through lower cost re-use and second-hand networks and increase their propensity to re-use and recycle in other areas in their lives.

For our referral partners, 41% were more likely to recommend second-hand items to the families they work with as a result of seeing the items gifted by Little Village. 18% said they were more likely to use second-hand items in their own lives as a result of seeing Little Village’s work.

27% of our kit donors told us that their experience of donating to Little Village had made them more open to using second-hand items in their own lives, and 8% were more likely to donate items in the future. 23% said it had opened their eyes to how useful donated items can be for other families.

Changing perceptions with these different cohorts increases the likelihood that they will engage with reuse and recycling in future.

2. Increasing engagement with recycling

Beyond changing attitudes, we are changing actions as well. 11% of our kit and clothing donors told us that they would have taken their items to the tip or put in the household waste if they had not donated it to Little Village. We are opening up new routes to donate for families who otherwise may not have done so previously.

3. Direct environmental impact

It is estimated that over 350,000 tonnes of clothing goes to landfill each year in the UK.¹¹ Much of this is likely to be wearable. Beyond clothing, millions of tonnes of baby items from baths to high chairs and cots end up in landfill each year as families struggle to find ways to pass on.

In 2021, we gifted on 26 tonnes of clothing, 26 tonnes of furniture, three-and-a-half tonnes of small electricals, two tonnes of books, and over a tonne of small plastics.

Using the WRAP Benefits of Reuse Tool we are able to calculate the following benefits from this gifting-on when comparing to the impact of these items going into landfill, using the assumption that items will be used for a further two years following gifting:

- 85 tonnes of CO2-equivalent emissions.
- 702,841 MJ-equivalent saving of fossil fuel energy from production of new items.
- 0.5 Sb-equivalent saving of other natural resources from production of new items.

This saving of carbon emissions is the equivalent of taking 18 cars off the road for a year.¹³

The methodology used is consistent with recognised standards on life cycle assessment (ISO 14040 and 14044) and guidance on Social Return on Investment.

Pillar 5

Advocacy

We engage in advocacy work because addressing the immediate, material needs arising from child poverty is not enough to achieve our vision of every child being able to thrive. For this to happen, we need to act as a force for change through both campaigning for policy changes and shifting the lens on child poverty.

A key facet of our advocacy work is the principle of “nothing about us, without us” – our families themselves are the most powerful voices to tell the impacts of living on a low income, and our work strives to create an audience for their stories.

Our work in 2021 covered two main projects:

I) Ensuring the impact of poverty on children under five is on the national agenda.

Most work on poverty looks at populations as a whole, or on childhood as a whole. Our belief is that the first five years are the most important, and so it is important to focus specifically on the impact of poverty on children in this group.



In partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, we published ‘It Takes a Village’ which revealed exclusive data on the prevalence and depth of poverty in families with young children.

This report revealed:

- 1.3 million of the 4.3 million children living in poverty are under five.
- For families with at least one child under five 34% of them are living in poverty.
- London has the highest rates of poverty for children in these households 43%),
- Poverty has risen faster in the last decade for children in these families than for families with older children,

- Families in London living in poverty are living at a deeper level of poverty, averaging only 66% of the income level considered to be in poverty,
- A quarter of the babies and toddlers currently experiencing poverty are living below 50% of the poverty line,

This work received significant media coverage, bringing the issue to the attention of politicians, thought-leaders and the wider public.

- We were the lead report on BBC Newsnight, with our research framing the whole report. This saw a significant increase in donations to JustGiving, and 18 donors specifically mentioned BBC piece as reason for donation.
- National & local coverage of the report included BBC News, *Evening Standard* and *The Mirror*.
- The report was mentioned in Prime Minister’s Questions by SNP MP Ian Blackford (and again in his response to the Budget). This was picked up in 17 articles including eight national (*Daily Express*, *The Scotsman*, *The National Scotland*).
- A webinar discussing the report was attended by 328 people including Katie Razzall, Home Affairs Editor at BBC Newsnight, Helen Hayes MP and Kathy Evans, CEO of Children England. Organisations in attendance included Save the Children, Education

Endowment Foundation, Comic Relief and the Refugee Council.

This led to further media coverage across the year with more mainstream outlets picking up the broader issue of early years child poverty and increasing use of baby banks.

It also created an opportunity for us to reconnect with the Duchess of Cambridge following her campaign during lockdown to engage businesses with supplying items to baby banks. She joined us for a Zoom call with our Founder and one of our families to discuss the ongoing impact of the economic effects of Covid. This work allowed us to reach a much wider, more mainstream audience:

- This was covered in 71 articles in total, including 41 local, 25 national and five international articles as well as ITV London News.
- National online coverage included *Daily Mail*, *The Mirror*, *Evening Standard* and *Daily Telegraph*.
- Six print features, including double page spreads in *Hello!* magazine, *Daily Express* and *The Mirror*.
- International online coverage included ET Canada, 9Honey Australia, France 24, N-TV Germany and 20 Minutos Spain.



Above HRH The Duchess of Cambridge on a Zoom call with Vicky and daughter Isla.



Top Amy and baby Ellie talking to Sadiq Khan. Sophie Livingstone, CEO, with Sadiq Khan, Rosa Allin-Khan MP, Marsha de Cordova MP, and Cllr Leonie Cooper

Above Our Battersea site lead Gemma with Alex Jones

In May we hosted a visit to Little Village Wandsworth by Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, Tooting MP Rosena Allin Khan and Battersea MP, Marsha de Cordova, giving Amy the chance to tell of her experiences first hand.

We were approached by Pampers who wanted to donate 500,000 nappies to UK baby banks, as well as draw attention to the challenges faced by families with young children. Their ambassador, Alex Jones (The One Show) visited us to learn about our work and then talked about us on social media and in the subsequent media coverage which included:

- Our CEO and Vicky, a parent we supported and now staff member, appeared on Channel 5 News.
- Channel 4's Steph's Packed Lunch talking about the importance of donating to baby banks and supporting local families.

2) Advocating on specific issues relevant to our families and communities

The volume of families that we work with across the year allows us to collate both indicative trends, and also powerful individual stories about the experiences of specific groups we are working with. Much of this work in 2021 focused on supporting those navigating the asylum process.

We provided a statement of evidence and were formally interviewed by the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration in their review of the use of hotels and barracks as initial accommodation for

asylum seekers and migrants. We were able to highlight the inadequate and inappropriate accommodation and support services experienced by many of the families we support, including aspects such as lack of access to transport to essential medical appointments, rationing of nappies and sanitary products by hotel staff, poor provision of essential items such as Moses baskets by accommodation providers, lack of food suitable for young children, lack of single-gender bathrooms (particularly an issue for women who have experienced trauma).

As a result of this work we were also asked to provide a supporting witness statement to a firm of solicitors representing one asylum seeker family as a test case against the Home Office in light of the poor state of accommodation provided which was unsuitable for their family circumstances. If successful, this case will open the doors to further families being able to take their case to court and should lead to an overall improvement in housing provided for asylum seekers whilst their status is determined within the UK.

The arrival of 8,000 Afghan nationals (plus 8,000 further British nationals of Afghan origin) in September received national coverage with an outpouring of support from many areas of the community. We worked on the ground with the Red Cross and the national Voluntary and Communities Sector Emergencies Partnership to address the immediate practical needs of young children in this group. It rapidly became apparent

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that provision of essential support by the Home Office was sorely lacking leaving many families vulnerable and in some cases in danger. We harnessed the media to draw attention to this issue with coverage in the ‘i’, the *Guardian*, and *Observer* and to increase pressure on the Home Office and local authorities to improve provision for families.

Conclusion

Whilst primarily known for our work as a baby bank, our work has far wider impacts and effects across the communities we serve.

We will continue to grow this work to address the changing needs of our families, and to further harness our wider audiences around the issue of child poverty. By ensuring low income families with kids under

five have the support and essentials they need; by working together with parents to fix the system that traps them in poverty; and by inspiring families to choose and share preloved kids’ clothes and kit, we believe we will improve outcomes for young children growing up in poverty.

Because now more than ever, it takes a village.

1. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty-london-facts>
2. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>
3. <https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/cls-studies/millennium-cohort-study/>
4. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/poorer-children-education-full.pdf>
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7. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1577898/>
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9. <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/co-sleeping/>
10. Maslow (1954)
11. <https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-publications/volunteering-family-affair/>

