



Welcome to Little Village,

What is Little Village?

Little Village supports families with babies and children under five living in poverty across London. We run a baby bank network, collecting, sorting and passing on pre-loved clothes and equipment. Parents are also supported by our dedicated signposting and guidance team, who offer advice and links to other services. In addition, we work with families to share their stories and campaign to fix the systems that trap them in poverty.

At our core, we alleviate material poverty through operating a baby bank - like a foodbank, but for clothes, toys and equipment for babies and children up to the age of 5. We collect great quality donations and gift these on to local families dealing with challenging circumstance such as homelessness, unemployment, low wages, domestic violence, modern slavery, and mental health issues. We currently operate sites in: Wandsworth, Camden, Brent, Hounslow and Hackney. We can either deliver the items direct to families or (depending on where the family lives) there will be an opportunity to visit one of our shops to choose the items themselves , all supported by our fantastic, trained volunteers. We've grown to be one of the largest 'baby banks' in the UK, supporting over 25,000 children since we launched in 2016.

Who can refer to Little Village?

Families are referred to us via a network of over 2,000 professionals such as midwives and social workers. We accept referrals from professional and voluntary organisations working with families in an official capacity. We do not accept self-referrals, or referrals for family and friends. We are also able to accept referrals from local mutual support groups and community support groups but will ask for additional registration details from you if you do not have an organisational email address.

What if I'm not sure if the family I support qualifies?

We only accept referrals for families with children up to the age of 5 years or mums 30+ weeks in to their pregnancy who need support and live in one of the boroughs listed below:

Barnet, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City of London, City of Westminster, Croydon, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Hounslow, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets and Wandsworth.

If you are unsure as to whether a family qualifies for support, we would always recommend reading the Referral Criteria section of our Referrals Policy. You are also very welcome to discuss any concerns with us directly. If you are still unsure, we are happy for you to use a 'reasonable doubt'

assessment of need, meaning in the absence of evidence of the family's situation, the judgment of the referrer can be used to put the family forward.

What if my family lives in one of the London boroughs that you don't deliver to?

We are currently **unable** to support families residing in: Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Ealing, Enfield, Waltham Forest, Newham, Redbridge,

We have compiled some resource to help you and the families you work with get support from other sources. These may be particularly useful if you are working with families who live outside the boroughs we currently deliver to:

- [View a map of baby banks in the UK](#)
- [View a list of family support resources](#), including other ways to source baby equipment and clothing, as well as more general support

What can Little Village provide?

We can provide clothing and shoes (up to age 5), essential baby equipment — including a safe place to sleep for a baby/child, bedding, a sling, a buggy, feeding and bathing equipment, toys and books, nappies and wipes — for any children under 5. Our items are **second hand** except for mattresses, bottle teats, breast pumps, nappies and toiletries which are all provided brand new.

Please note we don't provide formula or baby food, car seats, maternity wear, monitors, sleeping pods such as sleepyhead and docketot, white goods or nursery furniture, clothes for older children.

All items are delivered safely and directly to the family's home or families can choose their items from one of our family shops, depending on where they live.

I have a family I'd like to send your way – what do I do?

Visit the referral section on our website and complete our simple form. This form will take you through our referral process and ask you to fill in what the family need. You may find it easier to fill the form in whilst you are talking directly with the family (on the phone or in person if possible). We will only get back in contact with you if we have any further questions or can't contact the family.

How does a family get an appointment to attend one of your shops to choose their items?

Depending on the postcode of the family, at the end of the referral form, you will be given the opportunity to book a family in to visit one of our shops to choose and take away their items. You can either opt to book an appointment on behalf of the family or the family can book one themselves. If you choose the option for the family to book their own appointment, they will receive

a booking link via SMS and email. If a shop visit is declined e.g. mum is heavily pregnant and unable to travel, family live too far away then a delivery can be made instead.

How do I know if I am completing the form right?

The form is straightforward to use however these top tips below may help you complete it more accurately, **(please note if we don't receive accurate information on the form, we will be unable to process the referral):**

- Remember to double check that the family's contact details are correct, the address is very important as we may be delivering via a courier. The address needs to be in a clear format :

House / flat number and street name

Town

Postcode (in CAPs)

- Please fill out an individual entry for **EACH** child under 5 that requires support (use the **+add additional** child button) otherwise we will only pack for one child
- Don't forget to include an estimated due date for an unborn baby so we can establish how urgent the request is
- Please consider the kit you are requesting reflects the current needs of the child e.g. a moses basket is for under 3 months, weaning equipment is unlikely to be provided to newborns etc.
- Please consider whether the kit you are requesting is needed over the next three months. Don't forget you can re refer a family every 3 months if there is still a need
- Include as much information as possible on the form as we may not be calling the family to check and will only deliver the items requested

What happens once I refer a family?

You won't hear from us again unless we have any questions about the referral.

We will sms/call the family (using the details you have given us) the day before their delivery to confirm their delivery address and let them know roughly what time their items will arrive. If they have requested larger kit this may arrive in a separate delivery. The family will also be contacted after they have received their items to welcome them into the Little Village community and to offer further support and signposting if needed. If the family have booked a shop appointment (to choose and collect their items in person) they will be sent details of where to go and what to bring.

How long will it take if the family are expecting a delivery ?

We aim to deliver to the family within four to six weeks of submission of referral. The items are all delivered safely and directly to the family's home. If they have requested larger kit such as beds/ buggies this may arrive in a separate delivery at a later date.

Do you help families transport heavy items home after a shop appointment ?

Families are encouraged to only take home what they can carry. We advise that they bring a wheelee type suitcase to their appointment or friends/ family that can help them carry additional items home. If larger items such as beds and buggies have been requested at a shop visit, we can arrange these to be delivered free of charge at a later date, if they are available.

What if there are no shop appointments available to book?

New shop appointments are published regularly so in the unlikely event that non are available , please check back the following day via the link provided.

With both delivery and shop visits, we suggest sending our **What to Expect** leaflet to the family you are referring to alleviate any anxiety they may have over their referral. This leaflet is available on our website or can be requested from referrals@littlevillagehq.org.

Can I collect on behalf of a family instead?

By prior arrangement, referral partners may collect items from our sites

Do you always have everything in stock?

We often have a good supply of clothes, toys and books. Other equipment such as cots and buggies are in high demand. We can only gift on what is donated to us and operate a first come, first due, first served basis for cots and buggies, depending on stock levels. Unfortunately, we can't operate a waiting list for any items. We will do what we can to fulfil requests; however, alternatives may be offered if the original request can't be fulfilled e.g., a single newborn buggy and sling/ or buggy board may be offered if no double buggy is available.

How often can families be referred?

You can re refer a family back to Little Village every three month for clothing and equipment if the need continues.

How else can families get involved with Little Village?

We are volunteer run and would like to encourage families to volunteer with us. There are so many positive benefits to volunteering, including getting out of the house and meeting new people in a fun and friendly environment, learning new skills and gaining confidence and self-esteem. We know how busy life can be, so we have many flexible volunteering options available. We have Saturday family volunteering sessions available in Tooting and Brent that families can bring children along to. Some of our opportunities involve:

- Volunteering at one of our sites, sorting donations and packing up gift bundles for families
- Driving stock and delivering items to families
- Remote roles (for example, stock sorting at home, telephone liaison)

We offer volunteering opportunities at our sites in Tooting, Balham, Kings Cross, Wembley, Hackney and Hounslow

How else can my organisation work with Little Village?

We are always open to exploring different ways to work with our referral partners to help us support as many families as possible. For example, we work alongside a number of asylum seeker family drop in centres, running a monthly delivery drive from Little Village of clothing for babies and under 5s. Working with a regular referral partner and delivering to one location enables us to build relationships, limit our carbon footprint and reach more families.

Get in touch at referrals@littlevillagehq.org to chat further.

Keep in touch with us

Our website is regularly updated with our latest news and advocacy work www.littlevillagehq.org and on our network and local facebook groups:

<https://www.facebook.com/littlevillagehq>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/littlevillagecamden>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/littlevillagesouthwark>

www.facebook.com/groups/LittleVillageWandsworth

<https://www.facebook.com/LittleVillageBrent/>

We are always contactable on email- referrals@littlevillagehq.org. We are committed to providing the best possible service to our families, our referral partners, and our volunteers. We welcome all feedback – good and bad! Thank you for your involvement and for helping us in our mission to facilitate local families supporting one another with dignity and love.

**With best wishes,
The Little Village Team**