

IMPACT REPORT 2025



**LITTLE
VILLAGE**

**Baby things,
big impact.**

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The Little Village Theory of Change

Throughout this impact report, you will see references to what we **see**, what we **do** and what this **means**. This draws directly from our Theory of Change.

You can read the full Theory of Change, including our Vision, Mission and Values, on [p66](#).



1. INTRODUCTION



Welcome to our impact report

Supporting children and families is about more than meeting immediate need. At Little Village, we define impact as the positive change experienced by families, volunteers, and communities through our work. We measure impact across five interconnected areas:

- providing essential items for children aged 0–5 years;
- connecting families to wider support through guidance and signposting;
- creating inclusive volunteering opportunities that build community and purpose;
- enabling a circular economy by keeping children's items in use for longer; and
- raising our voice for change to highlight the realities facing families with young children.

Together, these activities help children thrive, reduce financial and emotional pressure on families, strengthen community connection, and contribute to wider social and environmental change.

In this report, we want to do more than tell you how many people we have reached or how many items we have provided. We will share all this data – and more – but

we also go beyond the figures, to tell the stories of how real people's lives have been improved through our work. In the following sections, you will find operational data and quantitative findings from stakeholder surveys, alongside quotes and stories shared by those with lived experience – all contributing to a rich and detailed picture of our impact over the last year.¹

Our Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Once again, in our 2025 surveys, we asked our families, volunteers, and referral partners how likely they are to recommend Little Village, on a scale of 1–10. Using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) model, our scores are as follows:

- **Family – 87** (up from 79 in 2024)
- **Volunteer – 85** (up from 78 in 2024)
- **Referral partner – 86** (similar to 89 in 2024)
- **Bundles in Partnership referrer – 86** (down from 92 in 2024)

This year, we are so proud that our scores have come in at **world class** – in every category!

The creators of the NPS methodology suggest that scores can be interpreted as follows: Above 0 = good; Above 20 = favourable; Above 50 = excellent; Above 80 = world class

Children living in poverty in London: the context

Poverty in the UK remains persistently high and is becoming deeper for many families. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) estimates that 21% of the UK population – that’s 14.2 million people, of whom 4.5 million are children – were living in poverty in 2023/24. Of that, the foundation reports that around half, totalling a record 6.8 million people, are in “very deep poverty”.²

JRF’s latest report estimates that **26% of Londoners** live in poverty. This is driven heavily by rising housing costs in the capital, and the high proportion of families who rent – in fact, when the cost of housing is taken into account, the rates of Londoners in poverty climb significantly.³

London’s child poverty rates vary sharply by borough, with areas in Inner and East London (including Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Islington, and Newham) tending to bear the highest burden.

And for some families, the risk of hardship is even higher because of the combined pressures of other factors alongside low income and rising costs.

This is evidenced by the particularly high rates of poverty among certain groups, with the JRF report highlighting that in 2023/24:

- 43% of children in **lone-parent families** were living in poverty;
- 44% of **large families** (three or more children) were living in poverty;
- 36% of **families with very young children** (youngest child under 5) were living in poverty; and
- 28% of **disabled people** and families including a disabled person were living in poverty – a higher rate than that for non-disabled people.

These risks are often compounded by insecure or low-paid work, high childcare costs, and reliance on a social security system that JRF describes as inadequate.

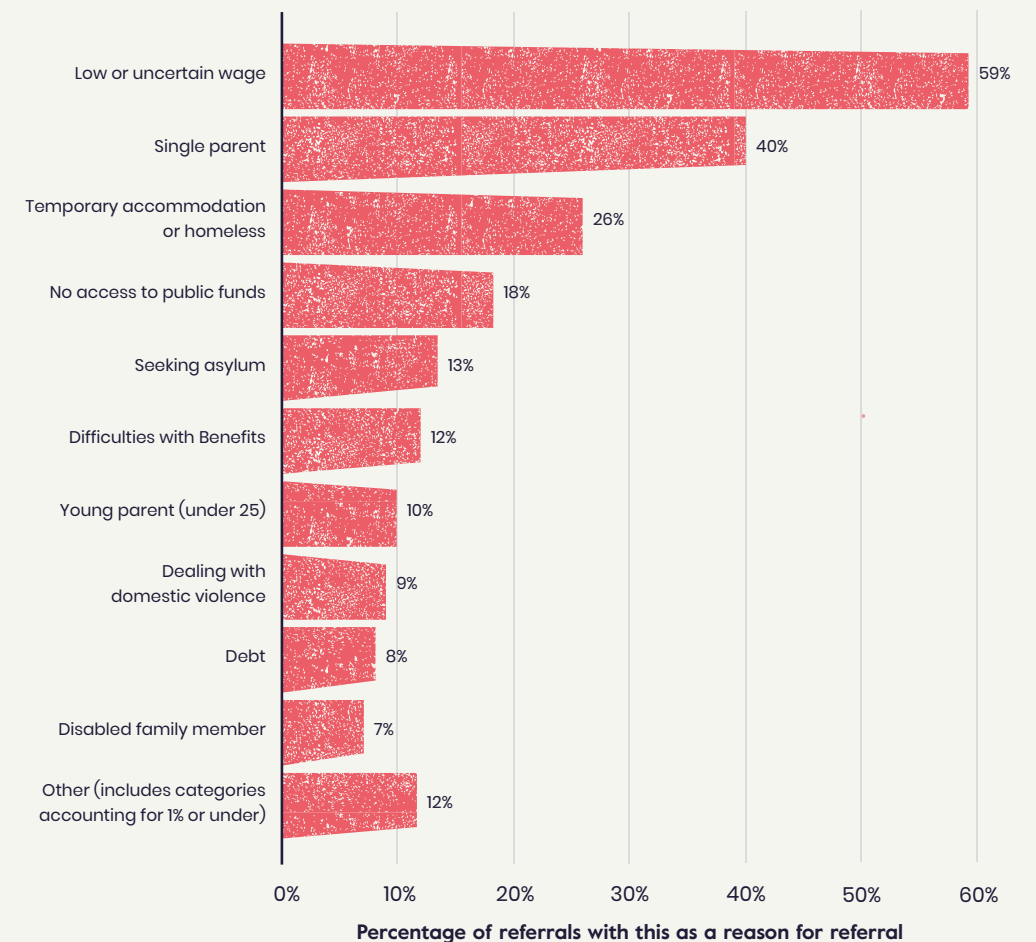
The early years of a child’s life are especially sensitive and important to their future. When families face income shortfalls, it can shape everyday life in ways that affect a child’s health and development; from nutrition and warmth to stable housing, access to services, and parents’ stress levels.

Evidence summarised by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) shows that poverty affects children even from before birth, and is linked to worse physical and mental health outcomes across childhood and later life.⁴

Recent UK policy evidence reviews highlight strong associations between low income and early outcomes such as school readiness – and emphasise that these early gaps can widen over time.⁵ Research and

practice-focused reviews of early childhood services similarly note how poverty shapes development and life chances, and that families facing hardship can struggle to access support that would buffer those risks.⁶

Why were families referred to us?



Who are the families we support?

Little Village supports families in every London borough. These families come from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, but all share a common challenge: the rising cost of raising young children while managing multiple financial and emotional pressures.

Families often reach Little Village at moments when they feel financially overwhelmed, many in crisis or with no other options; unable to provide essential items for their child.

Many are already connected to support services, and have been referred to Little Village by trusted professionals who recognise that a family needs our help.

The professional referral partners in our network include:

- health visitors
- midwives
- social workers
- children's centres and family hubs
- foodbanks
- housing and homelessness services
- asylum seeker and migrant support organisations

Together, they support families navigating complex challenges, from insecure housing and low income to isolation, emergency

situations, new parenthood, or arrival in the UK without established support networks.

How do families access Little Village?

At Little Village, we know that immediate practical support is often the first step towards wider stability and confidence. So we help families through a dual model:

- baby bank services, ensuring children receive the essential things they need;
- personalised follow up support to help families get access to a wide range of services and support in their communities to help improve their situation.

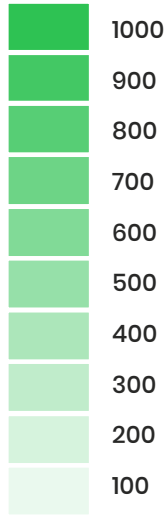
Through our baby banks, families receive high-quality pre-loved and new essential items for children aged 0-5 – helping ensure children have safe places to sleep, appropriate clothing, toys and books, and a variety of equipment needed for everyday life.

Little Village families that receive this practical help are then offered follow-up support through our Family Connections model – warm phone calls offering a listening ear, bespoke guidance, and signposting to other local services.

In this way, we help families access food provision, financial advice, health services, community activities, and longer-term support – all based on their individual needs.



Referrals
Up to...




'Bundles in partnership'



WHERE DO WE SUPPORT FAMILIES?

2. PROVIDING ESSENTIALS

for children aged 0–5 years



Between 2024 and 2025, Little Village increased the number of times it supported babies and children from 9,269 to **11,808** – a significant increase of 27% reaching families in every London borough.

2. Providing essentials

We see this:

Families can't afford the essentials their babies and young children need

We know that too many families cannot afford the everyday essentials their babies and young children need to grow, learn, and thrive.

Hardship is often made visible through the absence of ordinary items: a safe place to sleep, warm clothing, shoes that fit, or equipment that allows families to leave the house.

These are not small gaps. For example, in September 2023, Barnardo's estimated that around 894,000 children in the UK had needed to share beds or sleep on floors or sofas within the previous 12 months,⁷ while in 2025, Little Village's own surveys revealed that this is an issue for 69% of the families we support. And the impact of furniture poverty is profound, with evidence that children without appropriate beds experience poorer sleep, wellbeing, and ability to learn.

In London, financial hardship is frequently compounded by overcrowded housing, temporary accommodation, and poor living conditions.⁸ At Little Village, we hear about the lived reality of this from the families we work with – desperate

parents, who describe how these pressures affect their sleep, health, and parenting confidence, as well as their children's development. They tell us about the impossible choices they have had to make – heartbreaking decisions, like:

- **skipping their own meals** so their children can eat (40% of parents);
- **rationing nappies** so a pack lasts longer (21%); and
- **watering down their baby's formula** to stretch it further (10%).

For parents and carers in this position, not being able to provide essential items carries a profound emotional cost. When we asked families about how they'd felt before receiving support from Little Village, they remembered feeling:

- anxious about how they would provide for their children (**40%**)
- sad because they did not have everything needed (**39%**)
- very low or hopeless (**27%**)
- struggling with their mental health (**24%**)

Many families also described feelings of isolation. For example, **42%** of families we surveyed said they did not know where to turn for help, and **40%** said they had no nearby friends or family able to support them.

One parent shared:

“I feel guilty for my child that I’m unable to provide him basic normality of family living.”

— Family survey

Another reflected:

“My self-confidence was destroyed ... When I found Little Village I felt very happy and found them very helpful.”

— Family interview



Why early years support matters

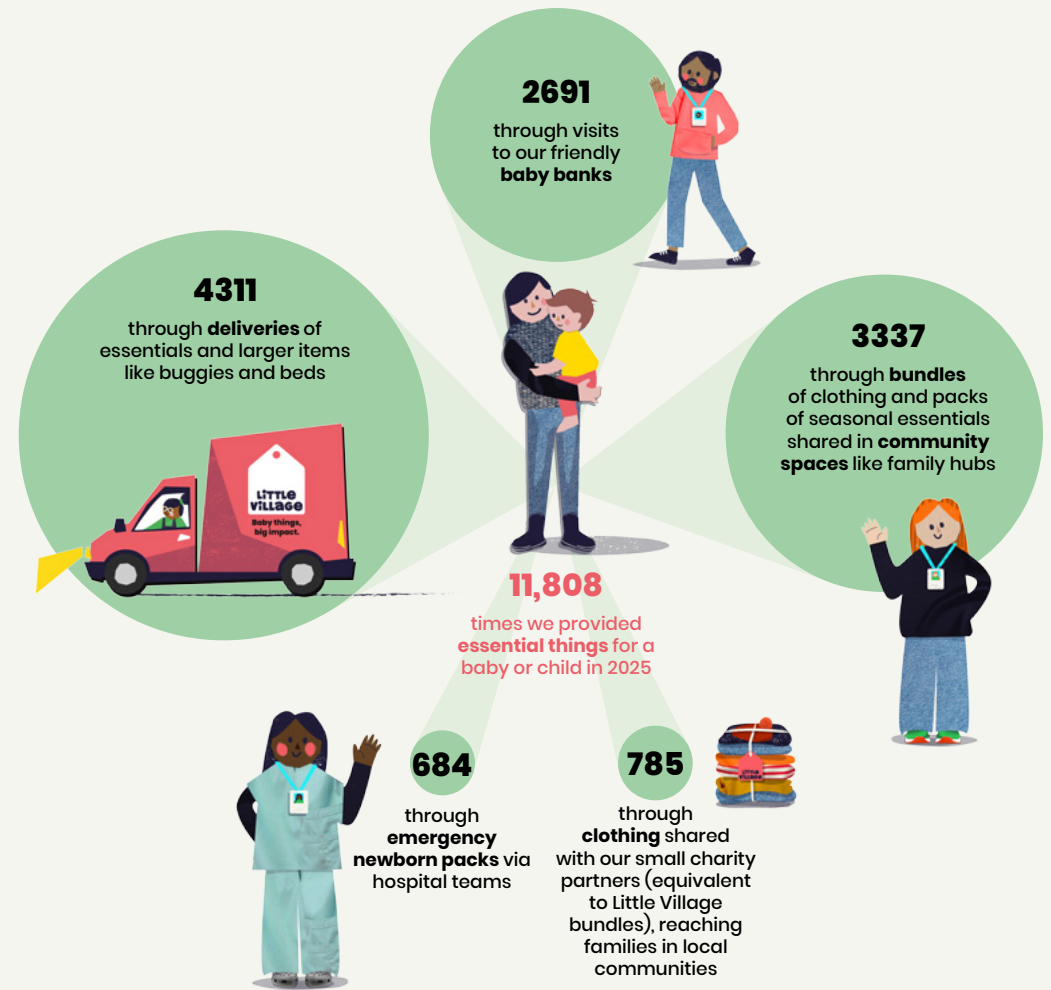
The UK government’s Best Start for Life vision highlights the importance of the first years of a child’s life in shaping long-term health, learning, and wellbeing.

But without access to essential equipment, safe sleep spaces, appropriate clothing, and simple things that support early development, inequalities can begin from the very start. By the end of the Reception year at school, this gap is already clear, with a 21% achievement gap between children growing up in poverty and their peers.⁹

Little Village exists to help close that gap, by ensuring babies and young children have what they need during this critical stage of development.



The number of times we provided essential things for a baby or child in 2025



Note: The data shows the number of times we helped a child through each of our different models of service delivery. In some cases, we support families with more than one child, or children have been helped in multiple ways, such as attending a shop appointment and receiving one of our seasonal splash packs or coats from their local children’s centre.

Providing essentials that meet children's needs

We do this:

We provide essentials so that children can thrive

For families who aren't able to visit one of our hubs, we take time to connect in a warm and personal way, welcoming them to Little Village by phone and listening to what they need.

Our welcome callers spoke with families 2,703 times in 2025 – making sure that each and every bundle could be carefully put together with just the right things for them.

So whether supporting families face-to-face in our baby bank hubs, packing beautiful parcels ready for delivery, or driving bigger items directly to families, our incredible volunteers help turn donated items into lovingly selected practical support for families who need it most.



This year across nearly every category, Little Village increased the number of essential items we were able to pass on to families.

Together with our volunteers, donors, and partners, we provided...

1,659 beds, cots, Moses baskets, and more – so babies and young children have a safe place to sleep.

2,335 ways for families to get out and about – whether on essential trips to the shops or the doctor, or just to have fun in the park. Items we provided this year included 1,247 buggies, as well as scooters, slings, and buggy boards for big brothers and sisters.

8,449 coats, protecting children from cold and rainy weather.

15,407 pairs of well-fitting shoes and wellies, fit for all purposes from pre-school to puddle-splashing.



978 baths and bath supports, for safe, fun bathtimes for even the smallest of babies.

588 highchairs, so parents can feed their children safely.

21,384 books – feeding children's imaginations and expanding their horizons, one story at a time.

22,850 toys – providing hours of fun to stimulate children's learning and development.

To buy new, the essential items would cost **£3.5 MILLION**



The essential items we shared with families would have cost almost **£3.5 million** to buy new – helping to ease the pressure on families’ budgets at a time when every penny matters.

And that’s not all. As well as the items we distributed directly from our baby banks, we also reached hundreds of newborn babies, born in hospitals to families who had little or nothing.

A total of 684 emergency newborn packs were delivered in 2025, and were available at every London hospital with a maternity ward.



The impact of receiving essential items: Practical, financial, and emotional change

We provide essentials. And this means that:

Children thrive, and families are less burdened both financially and emotionally

At Little Village, we know that providing practical items, alongside dignified, compassionate support, delivers measurable change for families. And when families talk about their experiences of Little Village, they frequently describe these impacts as being *interconnected*. Receiving essential items not only relieves financial pressure – it also reduces parents’ stress, improves their emotional wellbeing, and enables them to focus on caring for their children and planning ahead.

Combining different parts of our survey findings not only highlights this sense of interconnectedness – it also reveals insights into the *depth* of our impacts. For example, nearly **88%** of families reported improvements in their confidence or wellbeing and/or

reduced anxiety, while **93%** said they have experienced measurable financial relief. This shows how practical support translates into wider stability – when families no longer have to worry about meeting their children’s basic needs, financial pressure eases and parental confidence grows simultaneously.

And it’s also important that the proportion of parents reporting financial relief after receiving support from Little Village in *this* year’s survey (93%) matches the equally strong response (92%) to this question in 2024. This demonstrates a deep and sustained impact, protecting families from financial hardship despite rising and deepening demand.

Practical impacts for children and families

The items we provide are not luxuries; they are fundamental to childhood. These are essential items that have an immediate impact on children’s safety, comfort, and development.

We asked parents about these practical impacts. Their responses are shown below, alongside the equivalent results from our 2024 survey the year before:

- **62%** said items helped their children stay warm and dry (57% in 2024)
- **60%** said items helped keep their children safe (59% in 2024)

2. Providing essentials

- **53%** said items supported their children's play, learning, and development (46% in 2024)
- **29%** said items helped their family get sleep and rest (28% in 2024)
- **23%** said items helped children get out to nursery, children's centres, or groups (23% in 2024)

Once again, the strong pattern across several of these responses demonstrates that we are making a sustained – and, in the case of early childhood learning and play, growing – impact in the face of deepening need.

Supporting development and everyday childhood

Access to age-appropriate resources supports communication, movement, independence, and learning, helping children reach key developmental milestones and prepare them for school.

Families who have received toys, books, and early-years equipment from Little Village tell us that they've seen many developmental benefits like these in their children. In their own words:

"I am using the books to help with his communication – he knows different colours."

– Family interview

"I received a nice baby walker, and it helped my son to start walking."

– Family interview

"[I was] provided with brand new eating highchair, beakers, sippy cup, potty ... that helped with baby eating food, and potty training."

– Family interview

Helping families sleep and rest

Our surveys and interviews revealed that sleep is a major area of deprivation for the families we support.

Of the families we surveyed, 69% told us that they faced unsafe or inadequate sleeping arrangements – such as bed-sharing, inadequately sized beds, or sleeping on floors, sofas, or other improvised spaces – before receiving help from Little Village. Providing a safe place for their child to sleep was a source of worry even before birth for this parent, who told us:

"I felt hopeless when pregnant I was anxious as to what my son will wear or sleep in ... you gave me hope."

– Family survey

Nearly one-third of the families we surveyed said the items they received from us helped their household get sleep and rest.

2. Providing essentials

"My son is now sleeping in the bed with a toy he received from [Little Village]."

– Family survey

Yet, heartbreakingly, the need for support continues to outstrip what we can provide. Despite delivering over 1,600 beds in 2025, 6% of the families we surveyed told us they still needed a safe sleep space – and we were unable to provide one.

Enabling families to leave the house and participate

Getting out and about with young children can require a lot of kit – and for some families, access to essential equipment and clothing often determines whether they can leave the house at all. Providing them with these essentials unlocks their ability to participate, reduces isolation, and helps families reconnect with community life.

More than **40%** of the families we surveyed said that our support has enabled them and their children to get out more – for attending appointments, meeting friends, accessing community activities, or just taking a simple walk.

As this parent simply put it: *"I'm able to take my children where they want to go, they have good clothes so I can take them outside to the library and to the park."*

– Family interview

"The buggy it isn't too big and I can take it everywhere; it is easy to push ... It helps me to go to hospital appointments."

– Family interview

Another parent mentioned how the scooter Little Village provided meant her four-year old was less exhausted from his 30-minute walk to school.

And it's not just the equipment that's important for getting out and about. For this parent, it was the clothes provided by Little Village that made the difference, explaining that:

"I am not shy when I take them park or get to talk to other mums because my kids have nice clothes."

– Family interview

We gave families **2,335** ways to get out and about, including buggies and scooters



Another parent had a similar experience, telling us that:

“Before my support from Little Village I felt like I couldn’t go outside with my children as we didn’t have good condition clothing and now I can”.

— Family interview

Our professional referral partners agree. One told us:

“Having suitable clothing for colder weather meant that [the family they referred to Little Village] could keep going to nursery, keep going to the playground, keep attending appointments whatever the weather – I’m fairly sure all that would have stopped if they hadn’t been able to access Little Village. The referral stopped their world from getting smaller at a time when they needed to focus on the bigger picture.”

— Referral partner survey

83%

rationed nappies, skipped meals, kept the heating off, or missed essentials

Financial impacts

The families we support are under enormous pressure from rising living costs and other financial stressors. Receiving items from Little Village creates immediate financial breathing space. Among the families who responded to our survey after receiving items from Little Village:

- **93%** said our items freed up money for other essentials (92% in 2024)
- **83%** said they were able to avoid making difficult compromises on spending (80% in 2024)
- **86%** said they could not otherwise have afforded the items (93% in 2024)
- **88%** said buying the items themselves would have affected their ability to pay for food or bills (91% in 2024)

Experiencing this financial relief reduces stress and helps prevent families from reaching crisis point. Over four in five (83%) Little Village families described having previously rationed nappies, skipped meals, kept the heating off, or gone without essentials for their child or family in order to manage costs. Our support reduces the need for these harmful trade-offs, helping families avoid crisis and maintain stability during periods of acute financial pressure.

Here are some parents in their own words, describing how items from Little Village alleviated other spending pressures and

prevented them from having to make impossible choices:

“Most definitely save on buying clothes ... I was able to save money and use it on Christmas last year.”

— Family interview

“If Little Village didn’t give me a buggy ... With the [money saved from having to buy our own buggy] I bought shoes and a nappy changing board.”

— Family interview

“All I have to worry about is food.”

— Family interview

And in a tough economic climate, our service has helped public money to go further too, with 84% of our referral partners telling us that support from Little Village reduces the need for their publicly funded services to provide essential items.

97%

said volunteers' conversations were important or very important to them

Emotional and wellbeing impacts

Alongside practical and financial benefits, families value the warm, judgement-free experience of their interactions with Little Village, and described profound emotional change following our support. In their responses to our family survey:

- **88%** reported improvements in their confidence or wellbeing (85% in 2024)
- **97%** said their conversations with volunteers were important or very important to them (96% in 2024)
- **88%** said they felt heard and supported by Little Village (75% in 2024)

Receiving essential items does more than meet material need: it restores confidence, reduces anxiety, and helps parents feel capable again. Here are the words of some of our families, who spoke about dignity, kindness, and being treated without judgement:

“At first, I felt embarrassed ... but the people at Little Village made me feel very comfortable.”

— Family Survey

“Little Village are people who treat you with love, understand you, and never judge you.”

— Family interview

And our referral partners agree, noting that: *“Little Village has consistently been a go-to service for families in times of need. It offers*

support without discrimination and avoids rigid criteria that might exclude those who require help. As a result, families with a wide range of needs are able to access the service, ensuring that support is available to everyone who may benefit.”

– Referral partner survey

Families also value the way we really listen to their needs and make them feel heard – like this parent, who told us: “My baby girl, she loves cars ... I mentioned this to Little Village and asked for cars and they gave her a bag of cars. It’s been 6 months ... I find the cars in bags, in the freezer, and in the bath! Whenever I mention my baby loves a particular thing they try to get it for me.”

– Family interview

Other families described the renewed sense of confidence and pride they experienced after receiving items from Little Village:

“[Support from Little Village] allowed me to feel proud seeing my child in the clothes I received.”

– Family survey

“When the children are wearing good clothes, are well dressed, I don’t have to worry when they meet friends or new people. I don’t think they are thinking I can’t afford to dress my children. It gives me confidence to walk around.”

– Family interview

“I felt love ... she felt like she had a Christmas gift that her mummy has given her.”

– Family interview

And for some families, like this one, their experience with Little Village represented fundamental personal transformation:

“I’m happy and confident. You can hear in my voice I wasn’t this person one year ago.”

– Family interview

Reducing anxiety and preventing crisis

In our survey of professional referral partners, 96% agreed that support from Little Village helped to reduce anxiety and stress for families. Just knowing that support was available significantly reduced stress and prevented hardship from escalating, such as for this parent, who recalled: “We were told not to fret or fear and that there was this charity that could help us”.

– Family interview

When we asked families what they would have done without our help, they reflected on a bleak alternative:

“This would have mentally impacted family – potentially depression.”

– Family interview

“I would have financially struggled and would have been psychologically overwhelmed.”

– Family interview

How did families feel?

Before Little Village

Unsure

where to turn or how to get help, 42%

Anxious

about how I was going to provide for my child or children, 40%

Feeling very low or

hopeless

27%

Sad

that I didn’t have everything I needed, 39%

After Little Village

I feel proud

seeing my child or children in the clothes I received or using the kit and toys, 47%

Gave me

head space

to think about other things, 39%

Helped me feel

more confident

as a parent/carer, 46%

Reduced my

worry and anxiety

53%



Reaching families earlier through partnerships

It takes a wide and connected network to reach families across London. Alongside our online referrals, Little Village works through hospitals, children’s centres, family hubs, and community organisations to reach families where they are – at the earliest possible moment of need, and in settings that they already attend.

In 2025 we worked with more than **1,500 regular referral partners**, alongside **31 maternity wards** and specialist teams providing emergency newborn packs, and **29 local community settings**. Through our hospital and community partners alone, we provided:

- **684** emergency newborn packs (up from 485 in 2024)
- **2,885** Bundles in Partnership (BiP) (up from 1,635 in 2024)

In 2025, we also worked with community partners and at local cost-of-living events to distribute **242 beautifully bundled seasonal packs** – including “splash and play” packs with swimwear and sunhats during the summer heatwave, and **930 winter coats** with woolly hats and gloves in the autumn.

These partnerships strengthen our reach, and mean we can provide essential

items to families in places they already know and trust – often before challenges escalate into crisis.

Supporting families at critical moments: Emergency newborn packs

Our emergency newborn packs ensure that babies have what they need to leave hospital, while reducing stress at one of the most vulnerable moments in a family’s life. The hospital professionals who deliver these essential items report that they are frequently given to families experiencing significant vulnerability, including lone parents, those who face insecure housing, and those with no access to public funds.

90% of hospital professionals surveyed reported that families responded either positively or very positively when offered a Little Village emergency newborn pack..

One practitioner described witnessing immediate relief and gratitude, telling us that: “*Women are so grateful when receiving packs*” Hospital referral partner survey]; while another commented how:

“[The packs] are thoughtful and respectful as they are lovingly made up for families, and it shows!”

– Hospital referral partner survey

Strengthening frontline maternity and early years services

Emergency newborn packs are not only valued by families – they also strengthen the work of our professional frontline partners. Of those we surveyed:

- **100%** agreed the packs helped to meet the essential needs of newborn babies
- **60%** reported that the packs help them build trust with families

Professionals described how the packs supported both practical care and relationship building, mentioning that they helped to lessen workload, fulfil safeguarding responsibilities, and build trust with families earlier.



100% of maternity wards in London now receive Little Village emergency newborn packs

Bundles in Partnership: Creating meaningful change for families and professionals

Our **BiP bundles** provide everything a child needs for their next stage – clothes for the season ahead, including a warm coat and shoes; toys and books to support their development; and nappies for babies and younger children. Everything is carefully packed into one bag for families to take home.

Feedback from our partners describes the meaningful change these bundles create for the families they work with. In our 2025 survey of professional BiP partners:

- **100%** agreed bundles helped parents feel supported
- **100%** agreed families would have struggled if they had needed to buy the items themselves
- **86%** agreed bundles made a clear positive difference for families
- **71%** agreed bundles reduced financial pressure on families
- **71%** agreed items supported children’s development

Partners also noted that families’ engagement with their services often

2. Providing essentials

improved once their practical needs had been met.

“Families are delighted to receive their bundles and have been attending our sessions more regularly and accessing the programs we offer.”

— BIP referral partner survey

Providing essentials had created space for deeper conversations, allowing professionals to move beyond crisis response towards sustained family support. For example, one practitioner described how a family who received a BIP bundle had: *“... begun to open up about their vulnerabilities and areas of struggle. This has made it easier for us to support them”*.

— BIP referral partner survey

Preventing hardship and removing barriers to support

Without the items provided by Little Village, professionals note that they would largely need to rely on signposting families elsewhere or sourcing items informally.

But embedding essential provision within trusted services means families can get immediate support – meeting them where they are, right now – rather than delaying intervention.

Our partnership approach helps:

- prevent hardship from escalating;
- remove barriers to accessing services;
- strengthen engagement between families and practitioners; and
- support babies' development from the earliest stages.

Together, our BIP bundles and hospital packs demonstrate how providing essentials functions as early intervention in practice.

A partnership model trusted by professionals

Partners expressed strong confidence in the programmes and a clear desire for expansion, with many requesting more frequent access to bundles – particularly for additional development-focused resources, such as weaning equipment, and everyday essentials like socks, tights, and pyjamas.

2. Providing essentials

Looking ahead: Reaching families earlier and supporting development

In 2025, Little Village has provided families with essential items on an enormous scale – yet significant unmet need remains.

Families continue to face overcrowded housing, financial insecurity, and limited access to essential items. Many children still begin life without the resources they need for healthy development.

Looking ahead, we aim to reach more families earlier – particularly in settings where parents are already receiving support, such as children's centres, family hubs, health services, community organisations and charity partners.

At Little Village, we know that the provision of essential items is not separate from early years practice – it is foundational to it. That's why, if capacity allows, we will work more closely with additional early years practitioners to:

- provide essential items directly within trusted support settings;
- equip partners with resources that support child development, play, and learning;
- reduce barriers for families who may struggle to access additional services; and
- intervene earlier to prevent crisis and developmental disadvantage.

Building on the success of our Bundles in Partnership and hospital pack programmes, expanding delivery through trusted partners who are already supporting families will allow Little Village to reach even more families, even earlier. We can get high-quality items to the children who need them quickly, including donated stock that we currently can't distribute directly due to capacity constraints at our village locations.

This approach will not only strengthen our circular model, but reduce delays and barriers to access for children and families in need of essentials across London. And by embedding this much-needed practical support alongside professional, locally delivered care, Little Village hopes to ensure that even more children start life safe, supported, and ready to thrive.



RACHIDA'S STORY

Ten years ago, Rachida moved from France to the UK to build a life and a career. She was thriving – working as a financial analyst, financially secure, independent. She had done everything “right”.

Then, in the space of a few months, everything changed.

Pregnant with her first child, Rachida's relationship broke down and her partner left. Suddenly, she was facing new motherhood alone. The career she had worked so hard for had to be put on hold, and the steady income she had relied on disappeared overnight.

Unable to return to work straight away and struggling with severe anxiety after giving birth, Rachida applied for Universal Credit. The reality of life as a single parent on benefits hit hard.

“Universal Credit just doesn't bring in enough money as a single parent to be able to have enough money for everything you need. I was struggling to even afford food for me and the baby.”

The drop from a good salary to counting every penny was devastating – not just financially, but emotionally. Rachida wasn't just worried about bills. She was worried about nappies. About milk. About how she would get through the week.

When Rachida first walked into the Little Village baby bank in Camden, she felt overwhelmed with embarrassment.

“I'd been earning a good salary, but I found myself on my own and without enough money to pay for the essential stuff I needed for the baby.”

Asking for help felt like admitting failure. But what she found inside was something very different.

“When I came to Little Village, the staff made me feel like anyone else – they didn't see me as different or doing something wrong.”

Behind closed doors, Rachida was making unimaginable sacrifices to protect her baby from the impact of their situation.

“I would go whole days without a meal as I needed to buy things like nappies and milk. I just sacrificed my own wellbeing really – I went from weighing 76kg to 58kg – I was just going without everything and totally forgot about myself.”

For three years, she says, she didn't buy anything for herself beyond the absolute basics.

“I went three years without touching my face – couldn't afford things like moisturiser, nice shampoo or conditioner, and just had to buy really cheap stuff.”

Her world had shrunk to survival.

Through Little Village, Rachida received a pushchair, clothes, a winter coat, toiletries, nappies, wipes, feeding bottles, toys, and books. Items that many families take for granted, became lifelines.

“It felt like it was Christmas before Christmas! I felt so happy when I received the items. The people who donate don't realise how happy they make people like me who need them at the time. It's the nicer side of society and proof that sharing is caring.”

One delivery filled with books and toys arrived at a moment when she had nothing left after paying bills and buying food.

“My last package was so full of lovely books and toys and my boys love them. It made my day. We shouldn't think of education as a luxury but not everyone can afford these basic toys and books.”

Among the gifts was one small but unforgettable treasure:

“Easily my little boy's favourite item was this cute Thomas the Tank Engine backpack. He slept with it every night for a week, he was so happy!”

That backpack wasn't just a toy. It was comfort. Joy. A reminder that childhood could still feel magical, even in the middle of uncertainty.

Today, Rachida is rebuilding. She is financially independent from her former partner and studying for a new qualification in finance, specialising in money laundering. She is determined to create stability and opportunity for her sons.

Her message to anyone thinking about donating is urgent and heartfelt:

“Oh my, go and share! Look around you and think about others – so many people are really struggling. You might not know their background of why they're struggling but life can slap you very badly without warning. Send in your clothes, toys, books, prams, cots – and make another family really happy.”



3. CONNECTIONS

Supporting families beyond the baby bank

Our Family Connections Team of staff and volunteers engaged with families over **7,600 times**; providing a thread of human contact from the first moment they are referred until they're ready to leave us

We see this:

Families often lack support networks and need help getting help

For many families, poverty is not only about a lack of income; it also brings isolation, exhaustion, and reduced access to support. UK family-support charities report very high levels of parental isolation, consistent with the idea that financial hardship can shrink social participation and increase stigma.¹⁰

Parents of babies and young children frequently face barriers to accessing help, including:

- language and digital barriers;
- poor mental or physical health;
- disability;
- insecure housing;
- limited knowledge of available services; and
- lack of local support networks.

Families often come to Little Village for practical essentials, but many are also navigating complex challenges affecting housing, food security, immigration status, health or benefits.

One parent shared how we were able to help them in complex circumstances where they had previously felt isolated and unseen:

"I've lost my family, but you feel it most when you have a baby because suddenly I don't have that support network I thought I'd have ... I'm so grateful for the support that I've had from Little Village. [My S&G lead] was wonderful and understood that I slipped through the net."

— S&G impact questionnaire

Case study

We supported a mum living in temporary accommodation while caring for a baby with a disability and her other children as a single parent.

Alongside providing essential items, we referred her for food and energy support and signposted her to specialist disability advice and grant-funding support, helping her improve her family's living conditions.

Our Family Connections service

We do this:

We listen, guide, and connect families to support

The families we support receive more than essential items. They become part of our “Little Village”, a place where they feel seen, heard, and able to ask for wider help. Our approach is simple: we take the time to listen.

After every shop visit or delivery, volunteers from our Family Connections service proactively follow up with families, using interpreters where needed, to find out about any further support families may need.

We also let families know how they can get more involved with Little Village – for example, whether they might be interested in volunteering, or joining our families advisory group – or ways they can donate items back once they no longer need them.

In 2025, we connected with families **4,898 times** by phone, email, or text, after they received their items.

These warm follow-up conversations build on the trust created through our practical

support and make it easier for families to open up about needing further help. As one family put it:

“It really matters ... they didn’t just send things because they have to. It really matters that someone cares.”

– Family Connections impact questionnaire

Another family noted that: *“I didn’t feel any barrier asking for help”* [S&G impact questionnaire], while for this parent: *“The help came at the right time, when needed ... I was given what I needed and more”.*

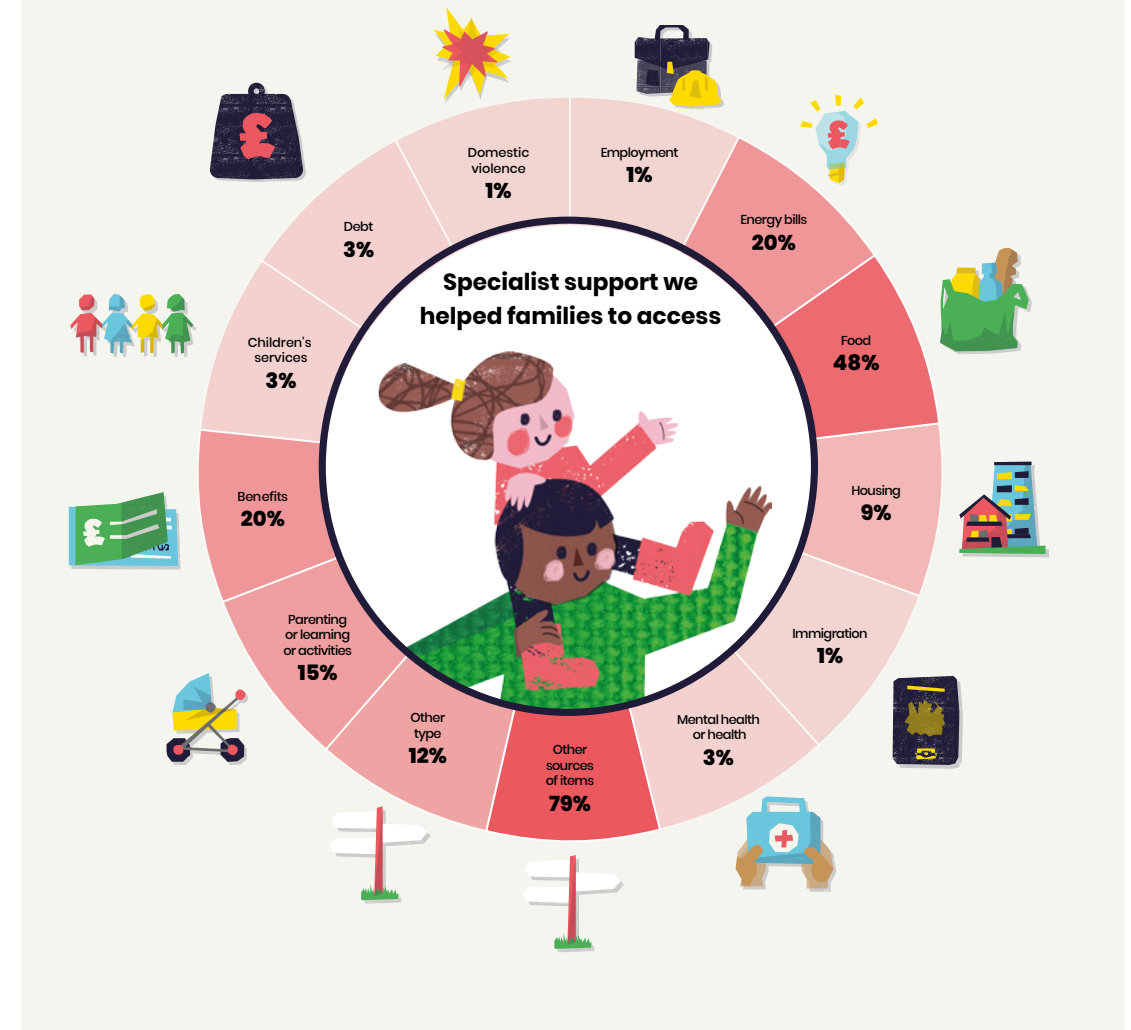
– S&G impact questionnaire

Our Family Connections and Signposting and Guidance volunteers provided either short-term signposting or more in-depth guidance in a total of **1,036 cases**, connecting families with services ranging from local community support and Healthy Start to Citizens Advice, energy advice, food banks, and specialist services. Of the families we surveyed, 82% said that we gave them information about other services that could help them or their family.

Providing deeper support for families facing complex challenges

Some families need more sustained support to access help successfully. Improving our triage process at the first

How we supported families beyond the baby bank in 2025



Note: As many families need support with multiple complex issues, percentages exceed 100%

follow-up call has enabled the Family Connections team to support more families efficiently, while the Signposting and Guidance team focus on those requiring longer-term assistance.

In 2025, 337 families with more complex needs received in-depth signposting and guidance support, lasting anywhere from one week to eleven months.

Each family works with a dedicated volunteer who builds a trusted relationship over time – offering encouragement, information, advocacy, or warm introductions to specialist services. One family described how this works for them, telling us that:

“I feel like when I need something, I can talk to [my dedicated S&G volunteer] ... I felt confident talking to her.”

— S&G impact questionnaire

Case study

We spoke with a single mother, with no recourse to public funds, who told us she needed emergency food support. Through ongoing conversations, we identified eligibility for Healthy Start and connected her with specialist advice regarding NHS maternity charges. Continued support helped her access services she would otherwise have struggled to reach.

Reaching more families through targeted signposting

Last year we piloted a new approach to signposting by proactively emailing or texting families about local offers they were eligible for – from fresh food pop-ups to free book schemes. From April 2025, we offered this targeted signposting 1,969 times, including support with:

- healthy food (906 families reached)
- children’s activities & development (767 families reached)
- energy support (306 families reached)
- school uniform (100 families reached)
- direct financial support (32 families reached)

By offering this additional support pathway, we were able to increase the total number of signposting cases nearly threefold, from 1,037 in 2024 to **3,005** in 2025.

And this brought huge additional impacts to the families we supported, with estimated financial benefits rising significantly from £22,714 in 2024 to **£55,137** in 2025.



Meeting families every day, we are increasingly seeing how **food insecurity** shapes family wellbeing.

In 2025, **46%** of all the targeted signposting offers we shared with families related to accessing healthy food.

This was a deliberate effort by Little Village to respond to the growing need – we actively sought out local food offers and food-related community initiatives and support schemes, so that families could access nutritious food without additional financial strain.



Impacts of Little Village's signposting service

We connect families to support. And this means that:

Families become part of our Little Village, where they feel seen and heard, and isolation is a thing of the past

In recent years, signposting has become a core part of Little Village's offer. Of those families who we provided with information about other services:

- **97%** said support finding other services was important or very important
- **95%** said our signposting and guidance had a positive or very positive impact
- **86%** said information we provided reduced financial pressure
- **94%** felt empowered to act after receiving information from Little Village
- **90%** discovered new local support through Little Village

The families we support describe how practical help and emotional reassurance work together. Here are some of their own words:

"They made me feel someone who is cared for and know I can depend on Little Village."

— S&G impact questionnaire

"They made me feel at home, wanted, and relaxed."

— Family connections impact questionnaire

Building confidence and independence

Connection often creates a ripple effect: once immediate needs are met, families feel able to engage with services, join activities, and plan ahead. As this parent put it:

"When we arrived in this country, there was a lot of pressure because I didn't know the system or how things work ... Little Village helped me a lot ... it helped me to be a good parent ... reduced my stress and anxiety, and now I feel quite confident."

— Family interview

Another parent noted how:

"[Little Village's volunteers] explain everything ... lots of links and different options".

— Family connections impact questionnaire

This shows how connection and warm guidance can reduce uncertainty at

moments when families feel most overwhelmed. It is the connection – not just the information – that makes the difference.

Through these relationships, families move from isolation towards confidence, community participation, and mutual support – like this parent, who found community and a way to give back through Little Village:

"When I just came to the UK, they were the first ones to support me... I had so much help that I have volunteered so I can give back."

— S&G impact questionnaire

Case study

One mother who we contacted to offer follow-up support shared that she could not access local services due to language barriers and lack of a working buggy. With support from an interpreter, we were able to issue her with a foodbank voucher and helped replace the broken buggy. We also referred her to a nearby children's centre, where she began attending activities, accessing advice, and taking ESOL classes.



Supporting families facing complex and interconnected challenges

Families who come to Little Village are often facing a range of interconnected pressures. Alongside needing essential items for their children, many are managing rising household costs, insecure income, challenges accessing benefits, and increasing pressure on everyday living expenses.

For some families, these pressures are compounded by more complex challenges, requiring sustained support. Among the families we provided with in-depth signposting & guidance support in 2025, 30% sought help related to housing. This was one of the most frequent issues we encountered in these more complex cases.

One parent shared:

“I fear that I will not be able to raise my child because of the cubicle-sized hostel room I am in – there isn’t even anywhere to bath my child properly and there’s no space to crawl, constant health problems arise because of the poor temperature control in the room, there is a hole in the wall by the window.”

– Family survey

We supported families living in unsuitable or temporary accommodation by connecting them to housing advocacy services, children’s centres, food provision, and specialist advice, alongside ongoing

emotional support. One family we supported in 2025 was living in a single hotel room without cooking facilities. Our volunteers connected them to a housing advice service that was able to take on their case, and advocated for safer accommodation as their baby began crawling.

And as ever, the impact of support from Little Village often goes well beyond simply meeting practical needs. Warm acts of connection and guidance can have a profound effect on families’ emotional wellbeing, as described by this parent:

“I was so stressed about our housing situation and to know I had the help and support made me feel more confident and happy.”

– S&G impact questionnaire

In the last year, our signposting and guidance support for families nearly tripled



What we want to do more of in 2026

While policy changes like the end of the two-child benefit cap may ease pressure for some families, many will continue to face financial hardship, insecure housing, or barriers to receiving support due to their immigration status.

In 2026, we want to continue to build on what we’ve started – connecting more families to the right support, at the right time. We aim to:

- reach more families before they reach crisis point, by connecting them with the right local support earlier;
- strengthen partnerships with community organisations across London; and
- develop deeper referral pathways with specialist services.

Connecting families to support will remain central to Little Village’s mission – helping families not only to meet immediate need, but to build stability for the future.

“It’s fantastic – they are bringing more ways to help families ... support was timely and consistent.”

– Family connections impact questionnaire

While we work hard to connect families to appropriate housing advice and advocacy, our ability to influence housing outcomes directly is limited. This can be deeply challenging when unsafe or unsuitable accommodation affects children’s safety, health, and development – and this is one of the reasons that Little Village continues to raise its voice for change.

In 2025, we contributed insights from families’ lived experiences to research exploring housing insecurity among families with young children, ensuring that the realities shared with us help inform wider conversations about policy and provision.



4. VOLUNTEERING

Building community, purpose, and participation



We see this:

A changing volunteering landscape

Across the UK, volunteering patterns are shifting. Nationally, regular volunteering levels are under pressure, with many people wanting to find flexible ways to contribute alongside the increasing demands of everyday life.

At Little Village, we are seeing this change – but also an opportunity within it. While interest in flexible and one-off volunteering continues to grow, with 70% of new applications now for one-off opportunities, we also still see strong commitment from those who choose to volunteer regularly.

In 2025, **699** regular volunteers contributed weekly across our hubs, warehouse, and remote roles. Weekly commitments increased by almost 10%, demonstrating that although flexibility is increasingly important, there is still a place for long-term and traditional volunteering.

Alongside this, participation in our one-off volunteering opportunities has grown significantly, rising from 146 engagements to more than **1,100** within a year. Our corporate volunteering scheme also expanded, growing by 49% to a total of **1,343 volunteers** across 154 sessions.

Together, one-off and corporate opportunities now account for **78%** of all volunteering at Little Village, reflecting wider national trends towards episodic and employer-supported participation.

In total, more than **3,100** volunteer interactions supported Little Village’s work this year, increasing operational capacity while opening more accessible pathways for people to volunteer in ways that fit their lives.

So we do this:

We create flexible, welcoming ways for people to get involved

With these changing patterns in the volunteering landscape, Little Village has deliberately designed volunteering opportunities with flexibility and tangible impact in mind.

Introducing a more flexible model has had a direct impact of the type of people we see volunteering with us. The largest group of active volunteers is now those aged **25–34**, with 69% of regular volunteers aged under 44. Half of our volunteers are balancing their hours with us alongside employment or study. As one volunteer noted:

4. Volunteering

"I love how flexible the volunteering is – I can do as little or as much as I can without pressure or judgment."

– Volunteer survey

Importantly, 25% of our regular volunteers have experienced poverty, either as adults or from their childhoods. This blend of lived experience, professional skills, and generational perspectives adds insight, empathy, and energy to our volunteering community.

Volunteers consistently describe Little Village as a place where contribution feels valued and purposeful. And for many, volunteering offers both connection and meaning – like for this volunteer, who told us:

"Sometimes the world can seem like a hard place for others and volunteering at Little Village is a way to try and address that ... it's a space where everyone's contribution is welcome and valued."

– Volunteer survey



4. Volunteering

We create welcoming opportunities. And this means that:

Our volunteers thrive – and so do the families we support



As in previous years, the experience of volunteering at Little Village remains overwhelmingly positive. Here are just some of the outcome indicators testifying to this across our impact data.



Our 2025 Net Promoter Score among volunteers was **85**, exceeding the benchmark for “world-class” satisfaction levels.

When asked to rate their satisfaction at the end of each shift, volunteers gave an average of **4.9 points out of 5**.

In our 2025 survey, **9 out of 10** volunteers said that they feel appreciated and valued at Little Village.

Volunteer retention has strengthened, with **67%** volunteers now staying for more than a year (up from 56% in 2024), and **79%** still with us after six months (up from 71% in 2024).

Although fewer people nationally are committing to regular volunteering, those who join Little Village are choosing to stay longer – meaning we can build continuity and community across our teams. As one volunteer reflected:

“I started out being a volunteer to help others, but I ended up helping myself too ... I feel better as a person every time.”

– Volunteer survey

While another shared:

“It’s very different to my day job ... I feel like I’m doing something that has real purpose and that in a small way I’m showing solidarity with families experiencing difficulties.”

– Volunteer survey

Volunteering creates personal growth, connection, and opportunity

As well as looking at satisfaction levels, we are increasingly measuring the impact on volunteers’ self-development.

We identified four areas of growth that we believe volunteering at Little Village supports (**personal**; **skills**; **connection**; and **progression**) – and explored the impact we’re having in each area using the results from our 2025 volunteer survey. This year, our findings show that:

- **44%** of volunteers report improved wellbeing, confidence, or sense of purpose.
- **42%** report stronger connection through meeting people from different backgrounds and building community.
- **8%** identify professional upskilling as an impact of their volunteering.
- **46%** use volunteering to complement work or study.
- **4%** use volunteering as a pathway into employment or new opportunities.
- **More than half** deliberately use volunteering to support a life transition, such as parenthood, health changes, or career change.

These findings are shaping future volunteer development plans at Little Village, including clearer pathways for recognising skills progression and development alongside the strong personal and community impacts that are already evident. Here are some of our volunteers’ own words, reflecting on the impact of their time with Little Village:

“When I joined as volunteer I was experiencing too much stress but after being with Little Village team I realised we are family ... it’s my family.”

– Volunteer survey

“Truly it is a joy to volunteer there ... the people are just genuinely lovely humans.”

– Volunteer survey

Stronger communities for families and volunteers

Whether sorting donations and preparing bundles, delivering directly in the community, or supporting families over the phone, volunteering at Little Village delivers impact in multiple directions – from supporting early intervention to providing long-term tailored support.

It enables families to receive essential support with dignity, while offering volunteers the opportunity for personal growth, skills development, connection, and progression. Our volunteers do not simply give their time – they become a community, working together to support families across London. As one volunteer reflected:

“Having that regular time where you’re spending it with generously kind people is something I look forward to each and every week.”

– Volunteer survey

The impact of volunteering is felt across all areas of Little Village’s work – they are integral to what we’re able to do, particularly in times of growth and scale. Put simply, Little Village could not exist without volunteers, and we are proud to create an environment people want to join.

We recognise that many people are living increasingly disconnected lives and can find it difficult to contribute to their communities in ways that feel tangible or purposeful. We have responded by creating inclusive volunteering opportunities that bring people together from diverse backgrounds, and offer skills development, meaningful connections, and shared purpose.

When our volunteers thrive, so do we, and so do the families we support.

Looking ahead

As volunteering continues to evolve nationally, we will continue to adapt with intention. We’re building an inclusive offer – one that is accessible to both first time and experienced volunteers, and flexible enough to fit around modern lives.

We are investing in clearer development journeys that welcome those with lived experience of poverty, those new to volunteering, and those with a strong appetite to contribute their skills. Our pathways are designed to create confident entry points and, where there is interest, progression into more specialist or leadership roles.

In order to do this meaningfully, we’re constructing a framework of support and supervision. As part of this we’re strengthening training, safeguarding, wellbeing, and role clarity.

NINA'S STORY

For Nina Pink, volunteering has always been about people – listening, helping, and being present where it matters most.

Her journey with Little Village began long before she ever put on one of our volunteer badges. “I first heard about Little Village when the now Princess of Wales, Catherine, visited the Brent branch in June 2022,” Nina recalls. At the time, Nina was already volunteering at a local school and foodbank, driven by a desire to support families in her community.

A few years later, when Nina decided she was ready for a new volunteering experience, Little Village felt like the natural next step. From her very first session, she knew she had found something special. “I was so warmly welcomed into the Little Village family – and it truly is a family,” she says. “Every time I arrive, I’m greeted with a big smile and a hug. That sense of warmth never fades.”

Volunteering at Little Village isn’t just about giving – it’s also about connection. Nina treasures the relationships formed behind the scenes, working alongside volunteers from all walks of life. “I love hearing people’s stories and learning about their experiences,” she shares. “We also host international students whose

courses align with our values, and it’s really inspiring to hear about their hopes and aspirations.”

At the heart of Nina’s experience, though, are the families. Families raising babies and young children during some of the hardest moments of their lives. “The most rewarding part is seeing the relief, the smiles, and the joy on parents’ faces when they leave with essentials they truly need,” Nina says.

For families who visit in person, being able to browse and choose items for themselves brings dignity and reassurance. For others, carefully packed bundles are prepared with the same care and compassion. “It’s incredibly moving to know that donated items – things that once belonged to someone else – are now helping a family feel supported, seen, and less alone.”

Nina believes volunteering has a quiet but powerful impact – not just on the families who receive support, but on those who give their time, too. “Even a few hours can make such a difference,” she says. “Volunteering here opens your eyes, broadens your understanding of the challenges others face, and reminds you how much kindness exists when people come together.”

Her message to anyone reading is simple and heartfelt: “If you’re thinking about volunteering, come and join us. You’ll

be welcomed with open arms – and you’ll leave with so much more than you expect.”



5. CIRCULAR LIVING

Looking after our planet



We see this:

Too many good quality items end up in landfill instead of being re-used

Across the UK, huge quantities of everyday essentials are still being thrown away. Each year, households discard more than 700,000 tonnes of textiles and around 670,000 tonnes of furniture, much of which ends up in landfill or incineration.^{11,12}

At the same time, many other families are in desperate need of the very items being discarded – from children’s clothing and shoes to beds, buggies, and toys.

We believe these two challenges are connected. By keeping good-quality items in use for longer, we can support families in hardship while reducing environmental impact.

So we do this:

We make it easy for people to pass items on

Little Village encourages people across London to donate pre-loved children’s items, helping extend the life of essentials that children quickly outgrow.

In 2025, we expanded opportunities to donate beyond our hubs and warehouse, hosting **179 donation locations** and one-off sessions across London via our supporter network. Through public donations and community collection points, we received more than **176 tonnes** of items into our warehouse.

Where these items could not be gifted directly to families, we ensured they were responsibly reused, redistributed, or recycled through trusted partners – giving them a second life wherever possible.



We champion positive attitudes around re-using and re-gifting

Our work is not only about redistributing items – it also helps normalise re-use and build confidence in circular living.

Among families, referral partners, and volunteers, attitudes towards circular living and second-hand items are once again overwhelmingly positive. Here are the results from our 2025 surveys, demonstrating the strength of this impact across each group.

Families

Among families receiving essential, pre-loved items from Little Village:

- **50%** became more open to reuse after receiving our support
- **81%** said they felt glad to be helping re-use and recycle
- Only **3%** said receiving items had made them less likely to use second-hand goods in future



And importantly, families want to continue the cycle:

- **69%** plan to pass items on to another family
- **63%** intend to donate to charity shops
- **58%** would donate back to Little Village or another baby bank
- Just **1%** said they would throw items away

One parent reflected:

“I realised the importance of donating clothes for babies as they outgrow it so quickly.”

– Family interview

Referral partners

Principles of re-use are already embedded within many partner organisations. Among those we surveyed:

- **39%** said they now actively find more ways to pass items on or recycle
- **45%** said they feel more open to using second-hand items personally

Volunteers

Volunteers also play a key role in strengthening circular behaviours. Among those we surveyed:

- **86%** said they already held positive attitudes towards re-use
- **51%** said they now proactively find ways to pass items on or recycle
- **58%** said they feel more open to re-gifting items

Together, these findings show that Little Village is helping embed a culture of re-use across families, professionals, and volunteers alike.

We make it easy for people to pass items on. And this means that:

Essential items reach families instead of landfill

In 2025, Little Village redistributed **147 tonnes** of children’s items – including clothing, bedding, cots, buggies, toys, and books – ensuring good-quality essentials reached families who needed them most.

We also shared enough clothing for a further **785 bundles** with organisations like The Magpie Project, The Multibank, PramDepot, and Family Action – organisations who share our aim of making sure every child has the things they need to grow, play, and thrive.

In 2025, Little Village gifted 147 tonnes of items to families

26 tonnes of small plastics, such as toys, bottles, beakers, and bowls

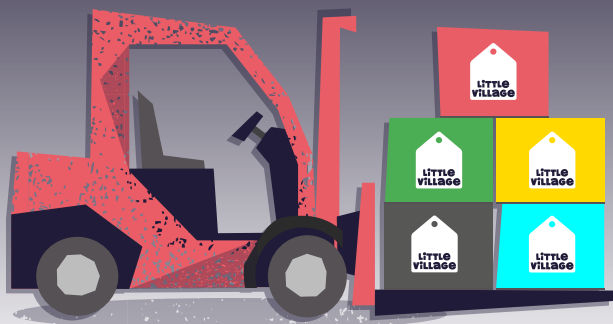
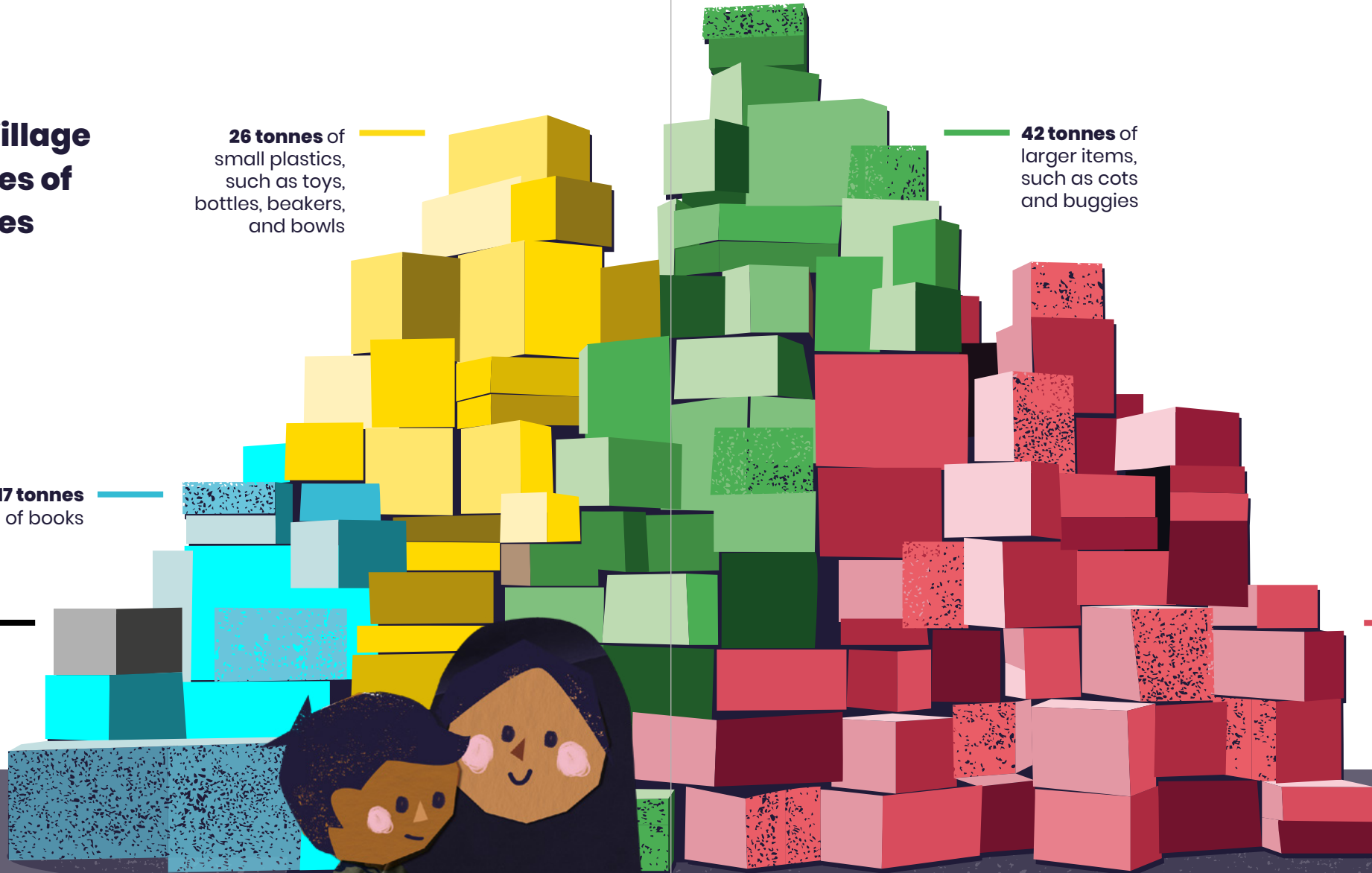
42 tonnes of larger items, such as cots and buggies

Note: Numbers rounded to achieve 147 tonnes total

17 tonnes of books

1 tonne of small electricals, such as sterilisers and baby monitors

60 tonnes of clothing and bedding



Environmental impact

By keeping children's items in use for longer, Little Village contributes directly to reducing waste and carbon emissions. In 2025:

- **147 tonnes** of items were gifted onward to families (up from 128 tonnes in 2024)
- **203 tonnes of CO₂e emissions were avoided** – equivalent to removing approximately 137 cars from UK roads for a year.¹³ (up from 174 tonnes in 2024)

We also contribute to environmental impact by ensuring sustainability across our operations. In 2025:

- **3,670 re-used cardboard boxes** (4.6 tonnes) were used for packaging
- **32 tonnes** of items unsuitable for gifting were responsibly recycled
- **12 tonnes** were passed to charity retailers or re-use organisations

Together, this prevented an additional 51 tonnes of material from entering landfill.

Working with partners to shape good practice in re-use

Little Village works collaboratively across the re-use and sustainability sector to help shape "what good looks like" for circular redistribution.

In recognition of this work and our contribution to sustainability through social impact, Little Village won the "**Social Value within a Community**" award at the Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management.

Within the UK sustainability sector, we are proud members of:

- WRAP (Waste and Reuse Action Programme)
- Reuse Network
- Charity Retail Association

Less waste, stronger communities, and a healthier planet

Circular living at Little Village delivers multiple benefits:

- families receive essential items with dignity;
- communities participate in sharing and re-use;
- fewer usable goods go to landfill;
- carbon emissions are reduced; and
- children grow up in a healthier environment.

People become more comfortable both receiving and donating pre-loved items, strengthening a culture where sharing resources is normal, valued, and sustainable.

Looking ahead

As donations continue to grow, we want to do more to ensure every suitable item reaches a family who can use it. By expanding redistribution through community partners and early

years settings, we can reduce waste further while supporting more children across London.

Our ambition is a city where children's essentials are passed on with care, not thrown away, creating lasting social and environmental change.



6. RAISING OUR VOICE FOR CHANGE



6. Raising our voice for change

We see this:

The realities of families in poverty aren't being heard or responded to by those in power

So we do this:

We listen to families, and we raise their voices – through our platform – to call for change

And this means that:

Families feel heard – and policymakers really start listening

In 2025, we took both a big-picture and a very specific approach – playing our part in the national campaign to end the harmful two-child benefit cap, while drawing attention to the individual circumstances families are facing, including through our highly impactful Nappy Appeal.

Campaigning for political action

As a member of the End Child Poverty Coalition, we were proud to work alongside our fellow UK members to call for the end of the two-child benefit limit. Together with other charities, including other baby banks, Little Village staff and families

took part in a demonstration outside parliament in November, using babygrows to illustrate the 109 children per day who are pulled into poverty by the harmful benefit cap. One mum was particularly engaged in the campaign and worked alongside us and other charities to take part in media interviews.

We were delighted when the government launched its Child Poverty Strategy and finally announced that the two-child limit would be abolished in April 2026 – celebrating the record 450,000 children this will lift out of poverty by the end of this parliament.¹⁴ And we were pleased to host The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to our hub in Camden to mark the launch of the strategy.

This visit, held in partnership with the Baby Bank Alliance and Save the Children UK, was an opportunity to talk to the Secretary of State about the power of providing essential items for families with dignity and love and the potential for baby banks to play a more central role in community support for families.

Creating systemic change

We have also turned our attention to exploring how Little Village's work can be delivered further upstream, to enable longer-term change and reduce the need for a crisis intervention to support families.



We began working with maternity units in 2024 to offer a newborn baby bundle for parents with little or nothing for their babies, and this continued to great success in 2025.

Now **all** of London’s maternity units have a partnership with Little Village, with newborn bundles available to hospital staff on site reducing emergency requests for support, and providing reassurance to both parents and midwives.

We have also been considering how the provision of essentials can support the achievement of outcomes set out in the Child Poverty Strategy – in particular ensuring that all children achieve a good level of development (GLD) at the age of five.

In 2025, we worked with a number of local authority areas:

- We took part in discussions with the **London Borough of Camden** on tackling child poverty, and presented to a full council meeting on this topic. The borough’s strategy, Raise Camden, names Little Village as a key local partner in this work.
- We worked with the **London Borough of Brent** to input into their EYFS strategy, looking specifically at how this aligns with the government’s Best Start strategy. As part of this we explored how we can offer development packs to help engage families at the borough’s Best Start Family Hubs, building on the success of the “splash packs” we provided there over the summer period.



- In the run-up to Christmas, we supported the **London Borough of Wandsworth’s** Climate and Sustainability Team to pass on pre-loved seasonal outfits and toys to families on the Winstanley and York Gardens estates in Battersea.

In terms of research, we contributed to:

- **Housing and Health**, NDL North-West London: Little Village families contributed our experience to this research, which focuses on understanding the impact of exposure to damp and mould and living in fuel poverty on health outcomes and healthcare utilisation in North-West London.
- **Housed but not Homed**: Little Village was one of eight charities partnering with the Childhood Trust on this new

report, which reveals the extent of the housing crisis and the impact of material deprivation.

Media and public campaigns

Our campaigns during 2025 helped to raise awareness of the challenges faced by families needing Little Village’s support and helped us galvanise support for our work from new and existing villagers.

In February, a report from the Competition and Markets Authority confirmed what parents had been telling us for years: the cost of infant formula is simply too high. We teamed up with families to raise awareness of the issue across the media, including the shocking fact that just under **10% of the families we support were having to water down formula** to make each box go further.

6. Raising our voice for change

With our shelves nearly bare, we ran an urgent appeal for nappies during July – and saw nappy donations pour into our hubs, alongside a record amount of funding totalling **£40,000** in just a few days. This specific ask, and the urgency of it, highlighted the importance of making the need both very tangible and comprehensible to the public – to both restock our nappy supplies and to hit home the daily reality for families.

Our annual Winter Warmers campaign was enhanced by the donation of £200,000 worth of free advertising space from Global, which meant

large-scale billboards ran our “New Lease of Love” adverts across London for three weeks during September and October. This fantastic opportunity helped us to broaden awareness of our work and secure the cosy coats and blankets needed during the winter months.

We continued to build relationships with families, developing opportunities for them to use their voices to share their experiences of poverty – and to help us help more families like them. Eight families were involved in sharing their stories during 2025, both through our own channels and across more



6. Raising our voice for change

than **70 pieces of national, regional, and international media coverage** spanning broadcast, print, and online outlets. This included partnership appeals with *HuffPost*, *The Independent*, Reuters, CNN, *The Washington Post*, Yahoo News, *The Sun*, *The Standard*, *The Times*, *Metro*, and *The Big Issue*; as well as millions of people reached through broadcast media, with appearances on BBC Breakfast, BBC London, ITV London, and BBC Radio London.

Raising the profile of baby banks through the Baby Bank Alliance

On a national level, we have continued our work as co-founder of the Baby Bank Alliance (alongside Save the Children UK, Purposeful Ventures, and Baby Bank Network Bristol). Over **250 UK baby banks** have now joined the Alliance.

Support from the Alliance has led to several UK baby banks featuring in national media coverage around the availability of formula and on winter hardship. A partnership with Giovanna Fletcher has also led to coverage and awareness-raising on social media.

Several corporate partnerships are in development that should lead to additional benefits for UK baby banks in 2026, bringing funding, in-kind products, and profile that could not be achieved alone.

Looking ahead

Projections from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation show that, despite the lifting of the two-child benefit cap, the number of children living in poverty will continue to remain high. This means it will be important to:

- **Change perceptions of poverty**, working with families to raise their voices and share their experiences, in the media and through Little Village’s own platforms and events.
- **Explore more “upstream” support** to families, by developing partnerships and projects with local authorities, the NHS, and the GLA to enable longer-term change and reduce the need for a crisis intervention to support families.
- **Consider the long-term potential for the Baby Bank Alliance** as an independent organisation, as its incubation period approaches an end in 2027.

Safeguarding

In 2025, **51%** of the 42 safeguarding concerns recorded across our services were referred externally to statutory services such as local authority social care teams and emergency services. Of these cases, **24** involved multi-agency information sharing to support preventative action.

Alongside strengthening how we capture and review safeguarding information, we have listened closely to families through interviews and frontline conversations. This has given us clearer insight into the

challenges families are facing when they come to our baby banks and support services. A consistent theme in both family disclosures and safeguarding data is housing instability and homelessness, often linked to wider crisis situations and economic hardship affecting children and parents.

We are also seeing a rise in cases of unintentional neglect driven by poverty, where families cannot afford transport to medical or dental appointments, cannot risk missing work, or are forced to live in unsafe or overcrowded conditions because they have no other options.

Many situations involve overlapping risks, such as domestic abuse alongside child neglect, unsafe housing, or acute mental health stress. Our role is to listen, recognise risk, and ensure the right agencies are aware and able to act – often prompting the change in circumstances and support our families need.

These insights shape our conversations with policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, helping to highlight the issues that are perpetually blighting families' lives, and to push for solutions that keep children safe and families secure.



Family participation

Through our **Family Participation Programme**, Little Village is strengthening how we raise our voice for change by ensuring our influencing and advocacy work is grounded in real family experience.

We created supportive ways for parents and carers to share insight through monthly group sessions, four in-person participation sessions, focus groups, regular virtual coffee mornings, and an active WhatsApp community. In 2025, **26 parents and carers** took part, contributing over **100 hours of lived experience insight**.

Families informed our work across the areas of communications, services, and volunteering, helping shape organisational

learning and future planning, with events including a lunch & learn session with our senior leadership team and a play therapy workshop.

Participation is also creating impact for families themselves. Parents told us that being involved increased their confidence, strengthened community connection, and helped them feel that their experiences matter.

Several participants have since gone on to volunteer with Little Village, demonstrating how lived experience can move from receiving support to shaping change. As the programme grows, families are not only influencing Little Village's work but contributing to a wider movement that values individuals' lived experience in shaping the systems and services designed to support them.



7. THANK YOU

7. Thank you

We are so grateful to everyone who has contributed to the work highlighted in this report:

- to the dedicated **volunteers** packing beautiful bundles or driving cots and buggies through London traffic;
- to the **families** passing on their precious baby things;
- the **runners** sweating their way through gruelling challenges to raise vital funds; and
- our **supporters and partners**, who give their time and money to help us keep growing our impact.

Every year our “village” steps up to the challenge – and it is thanks to them that we are able to report incredible results in the face of growing demand.

Despite the lifting of the two-child benefit limit in April 2026, UK child poverty is still set to stay at record levels, affecting children’s development and life chances. We are continuing to focus on expanding our reach across London, via community partners who can help us provide essentials for more families, more quickly.

In particular, we are exploring how we can collaborate with Best Start Family Hubs to support their target of ensuring all children reach the critical milestone of a ‘good level of development’ at the age of five.

This work will continue during 2026 as we develop our new strategic plan for 2027 and beyond.

We’ll also continue collaborating with other members of the Baby Bank Alliance to raise the profile of our work, communicating the power of essential items for families and the need to eradicate child poverty.

The challenge can seem overwhelming, but this report demonstrates that by working together, change really is possible.

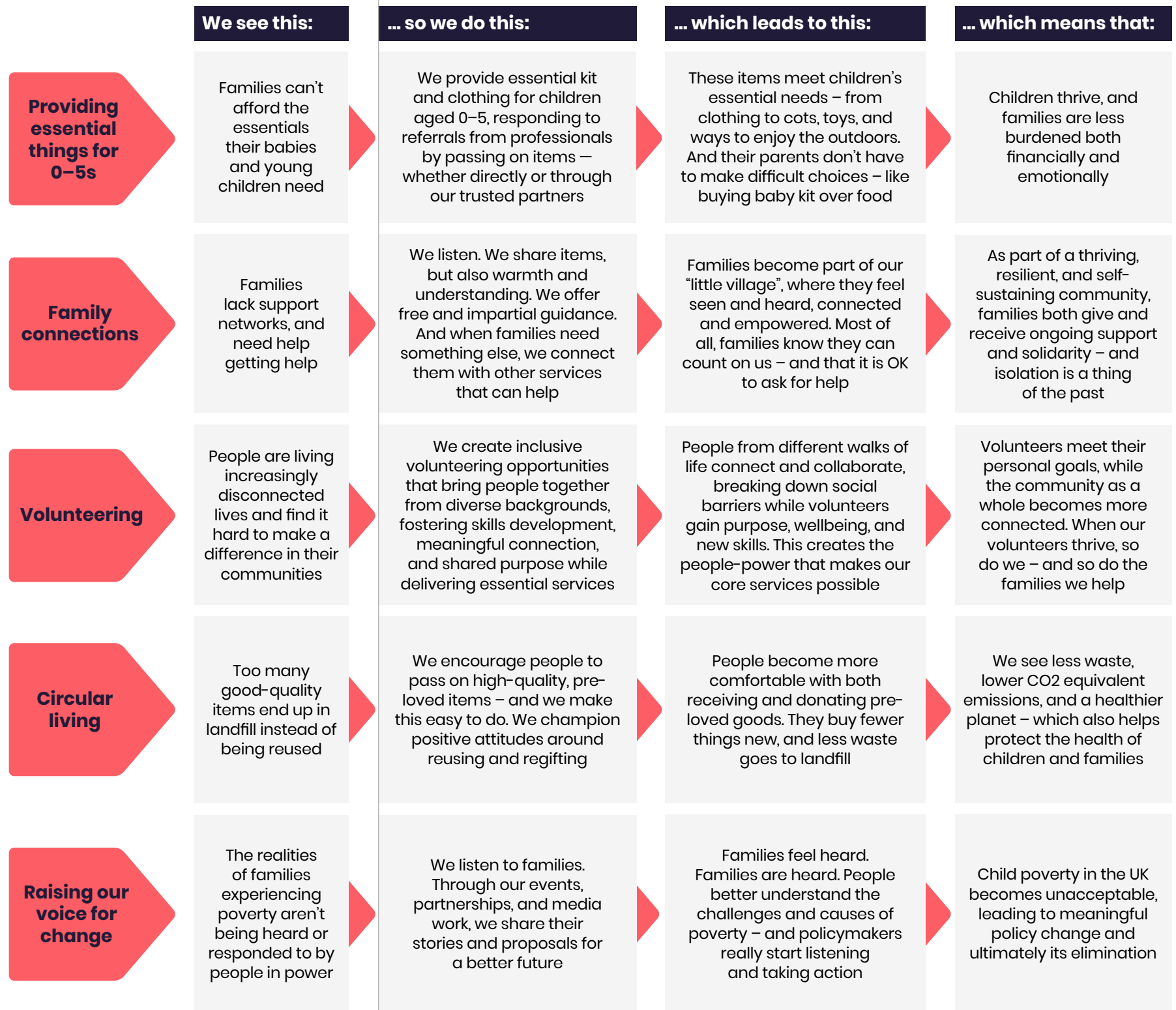
Thanks to the contribution of so many in our “village”, thousands of London’s children have a safe place to sleep, a warm coat, and toys to play with. Baby things – big impact.

Appendix A: Little Village Theory of Change

Vision: For every child to have the essentials they need to thrive

Mission: To bring about change for children and families through the power of sharing, reusing and connecting

Values: Love, Thriving, Solidarity, Sustainability



Appendix B: Methodology

The findings presented in this report draw on a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative operational data, surveys, and qualitative insights from families, volunteers, and referral partners. Using multiple sources allows Little Village to understand both the scale of our work and the lived experiences behind the data.

Data systems

Operational data is collected and managed through organisational systems that record activity across services.

We use a CRM system (**Salesforce**) to record family and referral information, including:

- reason for referral;
- borough and postcode data;
- age and gender of children supported;
- number of children in each household;
- items requested and provided;
- basic demographic information; and
- referral partner organisation type and professional role.

For managing volunteer engagement, we use **Volunteero** to capture data including:

- personal contact and demographic information;

- volunteering role;
- attendance, participation, and retention data; and
- volunteer satisfaction measures.

Additional operational insight is drawn from internally maintained tracking systems, including:

- stock tracking spreadsheets, used to record and track donations received, item sorting, and redistribution to families and partner organisations; and
- volunteer coordination spreadsheets, used to support scheduling, attendance monitoring, and engagement across volunteering programmes.

Surveys

Survey data provides structured feedback from families, volunteers, and professional partners, allowing us to understand both outcomes and experiences across different parts of our work. In 2025, we carried out the following surveys:

- **Family survey:** exploring the financial, practical, and emotional impacts of receiving items, alongside families' experiences of dignity, confidence, and wellbeing.
- **Referral partner survey:** capturing professionals' perspectives on levels of family need, partnership

working, and the effectiveness of Little Village's support.

- **Hospital partner survey:** exploring hospital-based professionals' experiences of distributing Little Village's emergency newborn packs, and their perceived impact on both families and on effective clinical practice.
- **Bundles in Partnership (BIP) partner survey:** providing insight from our partners in delivering early intervention through community and early years settings, via Little Village's Bundles in Partnership scheme.
- **Volunteer survey:** measuring satisfaction, wellbeing, and developmental outcomes among Little Village's volunteers.

Signposting & Guidance (S&G) follow-up survey

This data comes from questionnaires completed by families throughout the year, after they have received in-depth support from our Signposting & Guidance Team. In 2025, the team worked with 337 families, of whom 43 families (11% of the total cohort) completed the survey. These surveys focused on experiences of signposting, accessing services and developing independence over time.

Interviews and qualitative research

To complement the data from our surveys, we also carried out in-depth interviews with families and participants across all our services.

Anonymised quotes from these interviews, as well as certain survey answers given in participants' own words, are included throughout this report.

Family interviews

Interviews with families explored their lived experience before and after receiving support, including emotional wellbeing, parenting confidence, and longer-term outcomes.

A total of 17 families participated in these interviews, including some parents who took part jointly as a couple. We used careful sampling criteria to ensure that our interviews captured a range of experiences and backgrounds.

Family Connections follow-up feedback

Follow-up interviews and surveys with families supported through our Family Connections service provided additional qualitative insight around topics such as confidence, help-seeking behaviour, and access to wider services.

Response rates and other limitations

Response rates varied across the different surveys, reflecting the different audiences involved. These were as follows:

- Families: 14%
- Referral partners: 12%
- Hospital partners: 34%
- Bundles in Partnership partners: 30%
- Volunteers: 25%

Our family and volunteer surveys achieved participation levels consistent with typical charity-sector benchmarks. Our hospital and BiP partner surveys achieved comparatively high response rates, but involved smaller overall populations – which is an important consideration when it comes to interpreting results. Readers should also keep in mind the following possible limitations when looking at the findings in this report:

- Families' views were captured primarily through surveys sent to those who were referred directly to Little Village. The data therefore may not fully represent the experiences of families supported through our BiP partner organisations or hospitals (as surveys sent to those settings were completed by professional partners only).

- Responses to our volunteer survey reflect regular, shift-based volunteers, and do not capture the experiences of our many corporate volunteers or one-off participants.
- The families who participated in interviews are not necessarily representative of the entire cohort; for example, they are more likely to be English-speaking, and more likely to be comfortable about sharing their experiences publicly.
- Individuals who respond to surveys or interviews may be more likely to have particularly high levels of engagement and positive experiences, while those who are less engaged or have less positive views may not be fully represented in the data.

Wherever possible, we tested our findings and conclusions across a range of quantitative and qualitative sources, by comparing operational data and survey results with what we have heard from families, volunteers, and partners in their own words. While the limitations above should still be kept in mind, these steps help ensure that our findings are as reliable as possible, and grounded in both data and lived experience.

Throughout this report, statistics are rounded to the nearest full percentage point.

Endnotes

- 1 For more information on our sources of data, please see the methodology section in Appendix A
- 2 www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2026-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk
- 3 www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2026-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk
- 4 <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>
- 5 www.gov.uk/government/publications/costs-of-child-poverty-a-rapid-evidence-review-of-the-effect-of-income-on-child-outcomes/costs-of-child-poverty-a-rapid-evidence-review-of-the-effect-of-income-on-child-outcomes
- 6 <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2024/opening-doors-access-to-early-childhood-services-for-families-impacted-by-poverty-in-the-uk>
- 7 www.barnardos.org.uk/research/no-crib-impact-cost-living-crisis-bed-poverty
- 8 https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/full_house_how_overcrowded_housing_affects_families
- 9 www.centreforyounglives.org.uk/news-centre/what-do-the-governments-latest-early-years-statistics-tell-us-about-the-prospect-of-ministers-meeting-their-pledge-to-boost-the-number-of-five-year-olds-reaching-a-good-level-of-development
- 10 www.home-start.org.uk/news/new-survey-reveals-extent-of-loneliness-among-uk-parents
- 11 www.wrap.ngo/resources/guide/textiles-resource-hierarchy-end-life-energy-recovery
- 12 www.wrap.ngo/resources/report/study-re-use-potential-household-bulky-items
- 13 Calculation assumes average CO₂-equivalent emissions of 211 grams per car per mile (Department for Transport statistics, aggregated and analysed by NimbleFins [2024], available at: www.nimblefins.co.uk/average-co2-emissions-car-uk), and an average annual mileage of 7,000 miles per car (Department for Transport [2023], National Travel Survey, available to download at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics).
- 14 www.gov.uk/government/news/two-child-limit-scrapped-as-historic-bill-to-lift-450000-children-out-of-poverty-becomes-law?utm_source=copilot.com



“Little Village made me believe that I was not alone and we matter. Your beautiful team put a tear to our eyes, we were so emotional to see the stuff for our child, which was packed with love and care.”

— Parent we supported



**Member of the
Baby Bank Alliance.**

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