



Baby Necessities Southampton Referrals Policy

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Purpose:

- i. This policy is designed to guide our network of trusted and highly valued referral partners.

Aim:

- i. This policy is to provide an overview on the process of how to make a referral, who can make that referral and what the referral criteria is.

Introduction:

- i. Baby Necessities' vision is that no child within the Southampton and surrounding areas goes without the basic and essential items they need. We rely on the support of the local community to ensure this vision is made possible.

Who can make a referral:

- i. We invite referrals from all agencies who work with families in need to ensure that their child's basic needs are met.
- ii. Referrals will be accepted from any established organisation such as council services including children's centres. NHS services such as midwifery and health visitors, social workers, schools, nurseries and tutors, community organisations such as other charities and faith groups, Councillors or MPs.
- iii. Referrers may be volunteers or employees of the referring organisation but must have authority to refer from a senior manager. Referrals should be made using an organisational email, not a personal account.
- iv. All referrers should read this policy fully and accept the Terms and Conditions outlined on the website. It will be expected that referral partners acknowledge that they accept these Terms and Conditions on the referral form.

- v. We ask that all partners, irrespective of the nature of the partnership, make referrals through the formal channels.

Referral process:

- i. Referrals can be made via the website at www.babynecessities.co.uk using the referral form or via the referral phone line, Tel: **01794 765240**
- ii. Bundles of items requested are to be collected by the referee at a date, time and location agreed with Baby Necessities (within 10 working days of bundle being ready).
- iii. In cases where the referee cannot collect, either a colleague or the beneficiary themselves can collect.
 - a. If the beneficiary will be collecting, permission must be obtained from them before providing us with their personal contact details.

Referral Criteria:

- i. We currently collect items for infants and children up to the age of 5.
- ii. Referral partners are requested to make an assessment of need on behalf of Baby Necessities. We do not have any detailed referral criteria, we prefer to rely on the judgement of our referral partners who best know the family's circumstances.
- iii. We request that referral partners make all reasonable effort to understand the family's situation to enable them to make a fair and informed decision. Referral partners will be required to give brief reasons for the referral to enable Baby Necessities to ensure that items are given out in accordance with its aims.

A potential criterion is as follows:

- Low income: unable to afford the material possessions to meet the basic needs of the child/children or are expecting immediate crisis.
- No recourse to public funds: formal status for non-UK nationals who have no entitlement to welfare benefits, social housing or UK government asylum support.
- Temporary accommodation: accommodation secured by a local authority in order to meet its duty under a homelessness application.
- Seeking asylum: a family who have fled their country, applied for asylum and are awaiting a decision granting refugee status; as such entitled to health care and welfare benefits.
- Homeless: families without a home, and may be staying with friends or family, in a hostel, night shelter or B&B, or street homeless.

- Dealing with domestic abuse: either personally or an immediate family member dealing with the impact of abuse, including physical, emotional, financial, sexual, honour-based.
- Dealing with substance misuse: either current use of, or dealing the impact of recent use of, drugs in an amount or method which is harmful to the individual or to others.
- Single parent: a family with only one parent involved in the upbringing of any children.
- Emergency situations: including but not limited to situations of domestic violence, recent asylum arrival, victims of trafficking or modern slavery.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list.

Prioritisation:

- i. How soon the items are required must be noted on the referral form. In an urgent situation our turnaround time is 24 to 48 hours during week days.

To help us prioritise, please carefully consider the following when placing a referral:

- Is this family in a particularly vulnerable position, with no support from family, friends or other agencies?
 - Has the child already been born or is the baby due within the next 6 weeks?
 - Does the child need the item yet? For example, an infant will not need a highchair until they can sit up, weaning bundles are from 6+ months, stair gates are only issued when the child can move etc.
 - Can the bundle be collected promptly (within 10 working days) by a staff member or volunteer working with your organisation?
- ii. If you are requesting items for an expectant Mum, please do not complete a form before they are 20 weeks pregnant. Prioritisation for pregnant women will be done based on due date, and we aim to have the bundles ready 8 weeks before they are due.
 - iii. All other referrals will be fulfilled in order in which they are received.

Referral Fulfilment Guidance:

- i. Major items (including moses baskets, cots/cotbeds, buggies, strollers etc.) are limited to one type per child i.e. a newborn baby will be offered a crib or moses basket but not both.
- ii. Where items are in limited supply and the family already have an item that is safe and fit for purpose, a second item will not be offered.
- iii. If a family's need continues, they are welcome to be re-referred to Baby Necessities again for further support. If and when families return to Baby

Necessities for subsequent visits, we are unable to provide second copies of items again if they have already been provided. The exception to this would be if an item has been outgrown, for example if a family has received a single buggy and they were now requiring a double buggy due to the arrival of a second child.

- iv. Where referral partners are working with a specific group of families who all qualify for support from Baby Necessities, we may develop a partnership arrangement to support those families.
- v. Please note: stair gates are limited to two per household due to lack of donations of these and the expense to purchase them.

Returning items:

- i. Once items have been gifted on to a family, they are theirs to use, sell or dispose of as they wish. We do however, encourage families to donate back any items that are no longer needed so that they can be re-gifted out to more families.

Grounds for refusal of referral by Baby Necessities:

- i. In very rare situations, Baby Necessities may be in possession of wider information on a family than the referral partner. If that information enables Baby Necessities to assess that the family fall into any of the categories detailed below, Baby Necessities reserves the right not to accept a referral.

Grounds for this may be:

- Family income is deemed to be such that the family's needs could be reasonably met by the family;
- Families are requesting items which have previously been sourced from Baby Necessities;
- Families are requesting items which have been provided by another supporting organisation;
- Families have been evidenced to be repeatedly selling on items supplied by Baby Necessities and requesting replacements for these or similar items.

In this instance:

- Baby Necessities will communicate clearly to the referral partner what the grounds for refusal are.
- If necessary, Baby Necessities will communicate directly with the family to explain why the referral has been rejected.
- Baby Necessities will communicate clearly with the family that if their circumstances change, they are welcome to discuss a new referral with the Operations Manager.

In some circumstances we will request that a family seek support from another provider, rather than from Baby Necessities. This may be because:

- Baby Necessities are receiving unprecedented demand that we are unable to support in a timely manner and in a way which meets our standards of quality and safety;
- There is provision for support geographically nearer to the family's location;
- Baby Necessities are unable to source an item required by the family but are able to direct them to another provider who can help.

In these circumstances, Baby Necessities will refer on to local support, and inform both the family and the original referrer that an onward referral has been made.