

Volunteer Handbook



Welcome!

Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Baby Necessities. The time and support you are giving to our growing organisation means we can achieve our goals and help more families in the local community. None of which is possible without the fantastic support of our volunteers.

This handbook aims to serve as a useful guide; it contains information that will assist you in your volunteering work, whether that is on a regular or occasional basis.

We hope you will enjoy volunteering with us – we want you to feel like part of the team!



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1 Who Are We

We are a charity that was started by a couple of local mums during the pandemic of 2020. The creation of Baby Necessities came from a motivation to help alleviate child poverty after watching a documentary on the growing need for baby banks in the UK. Our vision was to support families during hardship, as well as see baby items our children no longer needed, re-used to protect the environment and reduce unnecessary waste.

2 Charity Details and Contact Information

Registered Charity Number: **1193806**

Email: info@baby necessities.co.uk

Website: www.baby necessities.co.uk

Facebook: facebook.com/baby necessities1 or @baby necessities1

Instagram: @baby_ necessities_ babybank

Linkedin: @baby- necessities- southampton

Twitter: @NecessitiesBaby

3 Our Trustees

Chris Hey (Trustee, Treasurer)

Imogen Hooton (Trustee)

Gary Essery (Trustee)

Rachael Reynolds (Trustee)

Our trustees can be contacted on admin@baby necessities.co.uk

4 Mission

To alleviate the impacts of poverty in children by providing practical support to those in need.

5 Our Aims

- 1) **Helping to give children the best start in life and relieving financial pressure on their families** through the provision of essential items such as clothing, equipment, toys and other essentials;
- 2) **Protecting the environment by recycling of pre-loved items** which reduces items going to landfill;
- 3) **Reducing the pressure on NHS and social care services** by providing necessities to the families they are working with.

6 What We Do

We collect good quality, pre-loved items such as clothes, toys and equipment, and distribute them to families in need. All items are cleaned and, where necessary, safety checked. We take care in the presentation of our bundles and every one of them is lovingly prepared by one of our volunteers.

7 Who We Help

Access to Baby Necessities is via third-party referral by professionals such as community midwives, health visitors, family support workers, social workers, educator or teacher, food bank volunteer, religious leader, etc.

We aim to meet each request with our stock of donated items and help individuals and families from all backgrounds, regardless of their personal situation, by providing their little ones (up to the age of 5 years old) with the basic supplies they need.

All bundles and items requested are collected on appointment by our referring partners from the Baby Necessities HQ in Romsey. They then deliver these items directly to the families they support to ensure that the identity of recipients is kept confidential. In some cases the beneficiaries will collect directly from our HQ, which provides us with the opportunity to meet the family and signpost them to other local services where applicable.

8 Where we are located

Baby Necessities HQ is located at Unit C1, the Premier Centre in Romsey.

There are 5 allocated parking spots for our unit. Alternatively, there is free parking along the road that runs through the industrial estate.

We encourage walking, cycling or using public transport whenever possible.

Full address:

Unit C1, The Premier Centre
Premier Way
Romsey
SO51 9DG

9 Office Facilities

Our HQ area is spacious and across two floors. We have dedicated areas allocated to different types of stock, and areas specifically for packing bundles. Some key points to bear in mind:

- Our dress code is informal. We suggest flat, comfortable shoes, and sensible clothing, particularly when packing bundles as this requires a certain amount of moving around.
- A Baby Necessities apron is available to use during your volunteering session if you wish to use one. This will protect your clothes and keep them clean, particularly for the more mucky jobs (e.g. cleaning pushchairs).
- You are welcome to bring your own drinks and snacks to our premises. There is a kitchen area with a sink, kettle and mini fridge. We have tea and coffee available to all volunteers.
- We do have lockers on-site for storing personal belongings, but we request that you do not bring high value items to our premises.
- WiFi access is available to volunteers and visitors. A poster will be visible with the network name and password.
- Toilet facilities are available on the ground level.

Local Amenities

We are relatively close to the Romsey Town centre, there are plenty of convenience stores, ATM's and Café's within a short drive from our premises.

10 Our Volunteers

Volunteers are integral to the success of Baby Necessities, and we rely on our volunteers to help us in lots of different ways. This includes washing and ironing clothes, safety checking equipment such as pushchairs and cots, sorting through donated items, preparing bundles and helping us to raise vital funds.

You will contribute to our work and help us to meet our organisations aims. Full support will be given, and training provided where appropriate. We aim to make all our

volunteering opportunities as accessible as possible so we can involve individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities in our work.

While you are with us, we want you to feel a part of the team.

11 Equal Opportunities

A copy of the **Baby Necessities Equal Opportunities Policy** will be made available to all volunteers.

We aim to ensure that all who wish to volunteer to help with our project should have an equal chance to do so and all applicants will be treated equally and fairly. We will not discriminate against volunteers because of their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. Volunteer applicants are accepted based on their suitability for the role.

Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their actions are not discriminatory to others.

12 Health and Safety

All volunteers are covered by, and subject to, the **Baby Necessities Health and Safety Policy**. A copy of which is available at our premises.

Accident prevention is the responsibility of all volunteers and all should ensure that their activities do not put others in danger or at risk. Should you identify a safety hazard or incident, you must report it to the staff member in charge as soon as it is safe to do so. Immediate action should be taken to prevent the hazard or incident from happening again.

If you have any concerns regarding your health and safety whilst volunteering, please inform the volunteer coordinator. If you have a medical issue which may require urgent medical treatment, please make this known to the volunteer coordinator at the time of your induction.

All volunteers will be asked to 'sign in' every time they enter our building. This provides a list of people present in case of evacuation. As a precautionary measure, we will also ask for an emergency contact number of a next of kin.

A first aid box and an Accident Reporting Book are available. You will be shown the location of these during your induction. Any accidents, slips, trips or near misses must be recorded in the Accident Reporting Book.

On your first visit to Baby Necessities, you will be told the fire regulations and shown the escape exits in the event of an emergency. Should you volunteer at one of our community events in an alternative location to our HQ, we will ensure that you are fully briefed on fire escape procedures, toilet facilities etc.

13 Privacy

13.1 Your Privacy

Baby Necessities Privacy Policy is available on our website and a copy will be available at our premises.

We respect your right not to be questioned about your personal circumstances, your disability or any prescribed medication that you are taking. You will be asked for some personal details when starting with us, such as contact details. If you work in one of our storage locations, you will also be asked for a suitable emergency contact name and number. If there is anything you want to tell us about your health or medical conditions at this time, it will be treated confidentially.

13.2 Client Privacy

Sometimes, you may meet our third-party referees (midwives, health visitors, social workers and other professionals) or our beneficiaries while they are collecting bundles from our premises. During these visits, it is possible that some information regarding the families we are providing for is shared. This information should be treated with confidentiality and must not be shared outside the premises. This also applies to any documents that you may come across.

13.3 Social Media

While we appreciate our volunteers and supporters talking about Baby Necessities, it is our Social Media Team that speaks on behalf of Baby Necessities.

As volunteers, you would not want to be in a position where someone else thought your views were those of the charity.

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Baby Necessities' work. Anyone can make a comment online, but make sure you are not caught out. Include a simple statement such as "Any views expressed on this account are my own and not that of Baby Necessities."

If you are using your own social media profiles, blog or website to fundraise or promote Baby Necessities' work please seek permission first and it should be clear that this is something you are doing in a personal capacity.

14 Under 18's

Volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent/caregiver and sessions must not last longer than 2 hours.

Due to the risk of some of our jobs, our younger volunteers may not be able to partake in all warehouse related tasks (e.g. where heavy lifting or climbing ladders are involved) but it will be discussed what tasks can be suitable and safely carried out.

15 Volunteer Sessions

15.1 Hours

Volunteer sessions run on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday morning between 10:00 and 13:00, but we do run ad-hoc sessions on weekends and evenings depending on the service need.

Donation drop off sessions are held every Tuesday and Friday between 10:00 and 13:00. On some occasions we may ask for volunteers to stay for the whole duration but this will be agreed on prior to starting.

Before your first session, we will confirm your availability and sessions will be booked in with you so that a suitable date and time is agreed. We offer a flexible working environment to our volunteers and try to accommodate volunteer requirements.

15.2 Getting Started

Upon arrival, you will be asked to 'sign in'. You will be invited to hang up your coat and wear a Baby Necessities apron over your clothes if you wish to do so. You will be shown around the premises so that you are aware of where everything is.

Volunteers are welcome to help themselves to tea and coffee at any time, and to take a break as and when needed.

15.3 Paperwork

You will be asked to complete a registration form which contains your emergency contact details and gives you the opportunity to let us know of any relevant personal health and safety requirements.

If you are going to be undertaking any physical work (involving heavy lifting or carrying) we will ask you to read the guidelines on safe manual handling (Appendix 1) and we will ask you to highlight any known injuries etc. that we will need to bear in mind when allocating tasks.

Volunteers do not enter a binding contract with Baby Necessities, you are welcome to cease activity and volunteering sessions at any time.

15.4 Tasks

We always have an on-going list of tasks that need completing which will be made visible to all volunteers. Priority of the tasks will be clearly highlighted, but we ask that you be as flexible as possible as priorities can change quickly depending on the needs of the referral sources.

If you prefer some tasks over others or have relevant skills, please let us know, so that we can do our best to accommodate your likes and dislikes.

Regular tasks include sorting clothing into appropriate ages and putting them away, ironing, cleaning and testing toys, safety testing equipment, packing bundles and gathering items for specific requests.

15.5 Item Quality

Item quality is a high priority for Baby Necessities. We want all items and bundles donated to our families to feel like a gift, and to be of the quality we would expect for our own families.

A small number of the donations we receive are not of the standards and quality we require. We do not pass on broken, stained, dirty, scruffy, torn or otherwise inappropriate items to our families. We like to exceed expectations of our referral sources and our beneficiaries. Part of your role will be to make decisions on such items, but we will guide you with the required standards.

15.6 Finishing your session

At the end of the session, we ask that you return your apron and wash any used mugs, glasses, utensils in the kitchen. We will also ask you to sign out on the registration form by recording your 'time out'.

We welcome any feedback you have about your experience volunteering with Baby Necessities. Our feedback form is at Appendix 3.

16 Insurance

All volunteers and visitors to our premises are covered by Baby Necessities Southampton's Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance.

17 Expenses and Petty Cash

Volunteers can claim for reasonable travel expenses (for example collecting or delivering donations), parking expenses at events and to be reimbursed for any purchases they have agreed to make on behalf of the charity. Please be aware that you are not able to claim for routine travel to and from our premises to attend a volunteer shift.

The volunteer coordinator can provide a copy of the expenses form and can explain how to complete it. All expenses will be reimbursed directly to your bank account.

Anyone purchasing items will be asked to provide a receipt for our records.

18 List of Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures relevant to the volunteer role will be sent to you as part of the volunteer package. Any others are available on request and hard copies are kept as Baby Necessities HQ.

- Accepting and Distributing Formula
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Donations and Charitable Gifts Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Fire Safety Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Referrals Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Terms and Conditions
- Volunteer Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

APPENDIX 1

MANUAL HANDLING GUIDANCE

We want you to have a safe and rewarding experience working with us. Please read these guidance notes taken from UK Health and Safety Executive advice on manual handling and then sign to say that you have read and understood them. Please ask for help and do not take on a task you cannot manage.

Why is dealing with manual handling important?

Manual handling injuries can have serious implications. They can occur almost anywhere in the workplace and heavy manual labour, awkward postures, repetitive movements of arms, legs and back or previous/existing injury can increase the risk.

What do I have to do?

To help prevent manual handling injuries in the workplace, you should avoid such tasks as far as possible. Does the item really need to be moved or can the activity be done safely where it is by redesigning the task? Can products or materials be delivered directly to where they will be used? Where it is not possible to avoid handling a load, for any lifting activity always consider:

- your capability
- the nature of the load
- environmental conditions
- training
- work organisation

If you need to lift something manually:

1. Reduce the amount of twisting, stooping and reaching
2. Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads
3. Adjust storage areas to minimise the need to carry out such movements
4. Consider how you can minimise carrying distances
5. Assess the weight to be carried and whether you can move the load safely or need any help – maybe the load can be broken down to smaller, lighter components
6. Consider whether you can use a lifting aid, such as a trolley
7. Think about storage as part of the delivery process – maybe heavy items could be delivered directly, or closer, to the storage area
8. Reduce carrying distances where possible

Good handling techniques for lifting

Think before lifting/handling. Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions from the route such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

Adopt a stable position. The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain your stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.

Get a good hold. Where possible, the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

Start in a good posture. At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Do not flex the back any further while lifting. This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

Keep the load close to the waist. Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.

Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Keep the head up when handling. Look ahead, not down at the load once it has been held securely.

Move smoothly. The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Do not lift or handle more than can be easily managed. There is a difference between what you can lift and what you can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

Put down, then adjust. If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, and then slide it into the desired position.

I have read and understood these guidance notes. I have made the team aware of any pre-existing complaints that may restrict me from certain physical activities.

Signature: _____

Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

APPENDIX 2

VOLUNTEER CONTACT DETAILS

Name:	
Contact Telephone Number:	
Contact Email Address:	
Emergency Contact Name:	
Emergency Contact Number:	
Area In Which You Live	

Induction Date: _____

Inducted By: _____

Shown Fire Procedures: Yes / No

Shown Location of First Aid Box: Yes / No

Please take this opportunity to mention below any reasonable adjustments we may need to make to accommodate any personal health and safety requirements. They will be treated in confidence.

During your session we may take photos which we will use on social media and other marketing activities. Do you consent to your photo being taken? Yes / No

Signature: _____

Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

APPENDIX 3

VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK FORM

Name:	
Start Date of Volunteering:	
End Date of Volunteering:	
Day/s Volunteered:	

What are your main reasons for leaving?

- Retirement / ill health
- Employment
- Moving away from the area
- Return to education
- Lack of time
- End of fixed term placement (e.g. work experience)
- Other (please detail below)

Do you have any suggestions for how we could improve volunteering at Baby Necessities Southampton? Do you have any other comments related to your volunteering?

APPENDIX 4

WAREHOUSE VOLUNTEER – ROLE DESCRIPTION

We are always looking for volunteers who can help at Baby Necessities HQ

What you will be doing:

- Sorting through donated items and putting them away
- Building bundles – clothing, toys, toiletries and equipment
- Safety checking equipment
- Testing and cleaning Toys

Skills needed:

- An eye for detail
- Good organisational skills
- Managing and prioritising tasks
- Team player

Time commitment:

- 2 – 3 hours per session on a weekday or weekend.

What we offer you:

- The opportunity to make a real difference to local families in need
- The opportunity to help a great local cause in the local community
- The chance to learn new skills and put existing skills to good use
- The opportunity to join a great team and build relationships

The training and support you need will be provided by the wider team.

APPENDIX 5

WASHING VOLUNTEER – ROLE DESCRIPTION

We like to make sure that everything that is given out is washed and folded (and ironed), so it arrives with the families in the best condition and ready to be worn.

What you will be doing:

- Sorting through clothing and removing items unsuitable for redistribution
- Washing
- Grouping clothes into age range

Skills needed:

- Attention to detail

Time commitment:

- Approximately 1-2 hours to sort and wash

What we offer you:

- The opportunity to make a real difference to local families in need
- The opportunity to help a great local cause in the local community

A guidance document will be provided to you with your bag of washing.