

## Sebby's Corner Referrals Policy

### Purpose of a referrals policy

Our referrals policy is designed to ensure that:

- we can support as many families as we can, with dignity and respect, so that no child goes without the essentials they need to thrive ;
- there is trust from families that they will be treated with transparency and fairness;
- donors can trust that items they donate to Sebby's Corner will support families in need.

### Who can make a referral

- Referrals will be accepted from any established professional organisation including council services, children's centres, NHS services such as midwifery and health visitors, schools, nurseries and tutors, civil society groups such as other charities e.g. foodbanks, refugee & asylum seeker support groups, faith-based organisations, community groups and Councillors or MPs.
- 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 such as hotmail.com
- Once you have registered as a Referral Partner, you will be given an RP number. This number must be used when making referrals. Your organisation will be given an ORG number which you will also need to make referrals. This ORG number will be used by everyone in your organisation, whereas your RP number is unique to you. Any Referral Partner found sharing their RP number will no longer be able to make referrals to Sebby's Corner.
- New referrers will be provided with an introductory email and follow up phone call to explain our services and processes. Where an organisation is new to Sebby's Corner, we may request more information about the nature of their work to learn more and to foster strong collaborative working.
- All referrals must be made via our online referral forms – referrals cannot be made over the phone or via our social media channels.

### Referral criteria

Sebby's Corner supports families facing financial hardship and Referral Partners are requested to make an assessment of need on behalf of Sebby's Corner. We request that Referral Partners make all reasonable effort to understand the family situation to enable them to make a fair and informed decision.

Self-referrals or referrals made by family or friends of the family will not be accepted.

Referrals can only be submitted for families with at least one child aged ten years and below (including mothers 30+ weeks pregnant).

We do not impose geographical limitations – if a family are able to get to our hub in Barnet, EN5 4DJ then they can access our support.

Families can be referred to us again for additional support 4 months after their previous visit.

The criteria for referral to Sebby's Corner is below. This list is not exhaustive and we ask that you use your discretion if a family need support but do not fit into any of the categories below.

- Low or uncertain wage: the household has had persistently low income, or are experiencing immediate crisis such as loss of job/ change in employment status, zero hours contract, illness or acute debt such as experiencing a house fire or large overpayment of benefits.
- No recourse to public funds: formal status for non-UK nationals who have no entitlement to most welfare benefits.
- Temporary accommodation: accommodation secured by a local authority in order to meet its duty under a homelessness application.
- Seeking asylum: those seeking asylum and awaiting a decision, appealing an asylum decision, or who have been denied asylum but cannot immediately leave the UK; as such entitled to health care and other support, such as education for children.
- Homeless: families without a home, and who may be staying with friends or family, in a hostel, night shelter or B&B, or are street homeless.
- Disabled or disabled family member: individual or family member with a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Domestic abuse: either personally or an immediate family member dealing with the impact of abuse including, but not limited to, physical or sexual, psychological and/or emotional, financial or economic, coercive control and/or honour-based.
- Affected by substance misuse: either current use of, or dealing with the impact of recent use of, drugs in an amount or method which is harmful to the individual or to others.
- Single parent/carer: a family with only one parent/carer involved in the upbringing of any children.
- Benefits sanctioned: where some benefits are stopped or reduced due to not carrying out what has been agreed in the family's claimant commitment; or appointments and/or meetings are missed.
- Debt: where money is owed to creditors, such as banks, credit card companies, or other lenders. This includes, having more debt than the family can afford, the debt is costing more than it should and /or the debt is causing emotional stress.
- Difficulties with universal credit: such as late payment of the universal credit, the wrong amount being paid, rejection of a claim (turned down) or delay waiting for an

appeal, the family being worse off on the universal credit payment, the credit payment is unable to cover outgoings or rent.

- Victim of human trafficking or modern slavery - those experiencing, or being victim to, force, deceit, fraud or coercion for the purpose of commercial sex, abuse, crime, forced labour, debt bondage or inhumane treatment.
- Young parent (under 25).

### **Limits to our support**

During certain times throughout the year, where our operations are impacted, we may be forced to temporarily halt the submission of referrals. If this situation occurs, we will aim to either communicate this clearly on our website or via an email to all Referral Partners and clarify the situation on the referral form.

If the decision is made to temporarily halt the submission of referrals we will do our best to limit this to a short period of time and will endeavour to include additional signposting to alternative support providers.

### **Guidance for requesting items**

Please ensure you know what items and sizes the families need before beginning the Request Form as it cannot be saved and you will need to complete the form again if you do not complete it. Unfortunately we cannot exchange items so it is very important that the sizes requested are correct. We kindly request you do not tick every box on the form, but only ask for items the family genuinely need to ensure we can support as many families as possible.

Certain items have specific policies as outlined below:

- Clothing packs, coats & dressing gowns – we can only provide one size per child. Families can be referred again in 4 months for the next size up if they are still in need of support.
- Nappies – we will provide 3 packs for babies under 6 months and 1-2 packs for babies over 6 months. We will always give baby wipes, nappy sacks and nappy cream with nappies.
- Formula – We only provide Stage 1 and Stage 2 formula. We will give 3 tins for babies under 6 months and 1-2 tins for babies over 6 months. We cannot provide formula for babies over 1 year.
- Bedding – Please provide us with an explanation of why a family need bedding if you are requesting it on their behalf e.g. they are escaping domestic violence and so were not able to take bedding with them. Due to huge demand for these items, we do not provide bedding as standard.
- Towels – We only provided hooded towels for babies and children. We cannot provide towels for adults.
- Toiletries – We cannot guarantee that a family will receive branded toiletries, they may receive supermarket own brands.

- Baby equipment – Families will only receive age appropriate equipment e.g. highchairs for babies over 6 months and potties for children aged 2+.
- Buggies – Buggies are in extremely high demand and we cannot guarantee that a buggy will be available for a family. If a family do receive a buggy from us, they will not be able to receive another in a future referral – it is a one time item.
- Moses Basket/Crib/Side sleeper/Cot/Cotbed – These will always be provided with a brand new mattress.
- School uniform – we have a limited stock of school uniform available throughout the year, however all items are unbranded. We do not carry stock of logoed items.

## **Providing the items requested**

We currently provide two main methods for families to receive their items. Both methods involve the family (or the Referral Partner) coming to our hub to collect the items. We do not deliver items directly. Our hub address is Unit G, Queens Road, Barnet, EN5 4DJ.

### **1. Shop Experience**

Shop Experiences are when a family come into our hub and choose the items they need. The appointment will last up to one hour. They will be shown around our hub by our Referrals Manager who will help them select their items. These appointments are in high demand and so there is usually a longer wait for this type of appointment. If the family are in urgent need, we suggest booking a Prepacked Collection instead.

We kindly ask that you or the family let us know if they can no longer attend the appointment so that we can offer it to another family in need. If a family arrive more than 15 minutes late for their appointment they will not be able to be seen and will need to rebook another appointment.

Please ensure the family have a suitable method of transportation for getting their items home. Families often leave with several large bags of items.

**Families must also have their reference number when attending an appointment – without this, we will not be able to conduct their Shop Experience.**

If a family attend a Shop Experience, any subsequent support will then be a Prepacked Collection.

### **2, Prepacked Collection**

A Prepacked Collection is when our volunteers will prepack the items that have been requested ready for the family to collect. These appointments are much shorter – 20 minutes – and have significantly more availability than Shop Experiences.

Please ensure the family have a suitable method of transportation for getting their items home. Families often leave with several large bags of items.

**Families must also have their reference number when attending an appointment – without this, we will not be able to give them their items.**

We kindly ask that you or the family let us know if they can no longer attend the appointment so that we can offer it to another family in need. If a family do not turn up to collect their items and

another appointment is not rebooked within 5 working days, the referral will be cancelled and the items unpacked and reallocated to another family in need.

### **What items can we provide**

The full list of items we can provide is available on our Referral Form.

We may not have everything the family need as we rely on donations from the local community. Equipment such as cots, highchairs, buggies are in high demand and unfortunately, we can't operate a waiting list for these popular items. We will do what we can to fulfil these requests; however, alternatives may be offered if the original request can't be fulfilled e.g., a single newborn buggy and sling or buggy board may be offered if no double buggy is available.

We are unable to swap or provide additional items on request after the referral has been fulfilled.

We ask that Referral Partners make reasonable efforts to set the expectations of the family regarding the availability and condition of the items Sebby's Corner provides (as detailed above).

### **Donating back items**

We do encourage families to donate back any items that are no longer needed, ensuring they are clean and in good order, so that they can be re-gifted out to more families.

In order to facilitate supporting as many families as possible, families may be requested to donate back any major items they have been given by Sebby's Corner which they no longer need if they are moving on to the next stage of travel equipment. For example, a family who have been provided a buggy suitable from birth and who now need a double buggy for a toddler and newborn will be asked if they are able to bring the original buggy back.

Whilst we encourage the regifting to another family of items, we appreciate this is not always possible. We do request that families do not sell on items that have been provided by Sebby's Corner once those items are no longer needed.

### **Frequency of referral**

If a family's need continues, they are welcome to visit Sebby's Corner again for further support. We ask that families leave at least four months in between referrals. The four months period refers to the date the family receives their items (either via a shop appointment or prepacked collection), not the date that the referral was submitted. This includes referrals that have been made for the same family by a different Referral Partner.

If, and when, families return to Sebby's Corner for subsequent visits, we are unable to provide the same type of equipment again if they have already been provided.

The exception to this would be where a family has outgrown the original item or their needs have changed – for example they require a different type of buggy due to the arrival of another child.

We would, however, request that where possible the family swap back the original item provided.

A family is able to attend one Shop Experience, after this, support will be offered in the form of Prepacked Collections.

All families must abide by the Code of Conduct when onsite at Sebby's Corner. Any family found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct will be asked to leave and will no longer be able to access support from Sebby's Corner.

### **Grounds for refusal of referral by Sebby's Corner**

In very rare situations, Sebby's Corner reserves the right not to accept a referral, for example if a family have broken the Code of Conduct at a previous appointment.

In this instance Sebby's Corner will:

- Communicate clearly to the Referral Partner what the grounds for refusal are;
- Communicate directly with the family to explain why the referral has been rejected;

All families attending Sebby's Corner must have been referred AND have a prebooked appointment. If a family arrives at Sebby's Corner before a referral form has been submitted or without a prebooked appointment they will be asked to leave. We do not have the capacity to safely look after families at our site if we become overcrowded by families without appointments. Referral partners who repeatedly send families to Sebby's Corner with appointments will unfortunately have their registration cancelled and be unable to make future referrals.

In some circumstances we will request that a family seek support from another provider, rather than from Sebby's Corner. This may be because:

- The family's last referral was made less than four months prior
- The family is requesting a single item we do not have in stock.

In these circumstances, Sebby's Corner will advise the family and original referrer of alternative local support.

### **Policy reviews**

We are happy to discuss the Referrals Policy at any time with our Referral Partners and welcome their feedback on our processes, in the interests of making them as accessible and welcoming as possible for the families we support.

This policy will be reviewed annually. Signed:

Bianca Sakol MBE, CEO, Sebby's Corner

Last reviewed August 2024