

# Impact Report

## November 2024



## Message from our CEO

This past year has been a milestone for Sebby's Corner. With the move to our new hub, a visit from HRH Princess of Wales and an increase in staff to expand our capacity, we are now able to support 120 families each month. Our network has also grown significantly, with 812 referral partners now making referrals from 338 organisations. This expansion has allowed us to reach even more families in need, strengthening our impact and deepening our commitment to the community. As we approach our three year anniversary, we are proud of all we have achieved together this year and look forward to continuing our work in the coming year. We are so grateful for your support.



**Bianca Sakol MBE, Founder & CEO**

## Highlights from 2023-2024

### HRH Princess of Wales visit



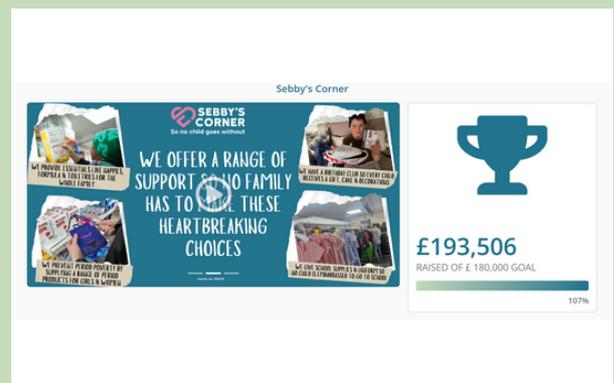
### Move to a brand new hub



### Sky News interview with Kay Burley



### Successful Charity Extra Appeal



## What We Do

Sebby's Corner believes no child should go without the essentials they need to thrive. We have a range of services to support vulnerable families across Greater London and the Home Counties. We support families living in poverty, families escaping domestic abuse, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Families are referred to us by professionals so we can ensure we are reaching the families most in need.

### Essentials Support

Families can access a wide range of essential resources, including clothing, baby equipment, nappies, toiletries, buggies, and other necessities for their children. This support helps to ease financial strain, ensuring children have the essentials they need for their health, safety, and development, whilst easing the stress and burden on their parents.

### Birthday Club

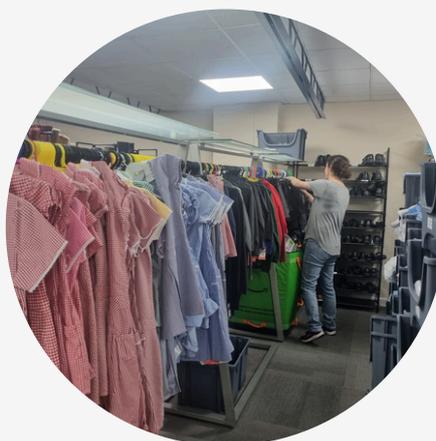
Thousands of children in the UK go without a single birthday present each year. Children who are referred to our Birthday Club receive gifts, balloons, decorations, and a delicious birthday cake so they can celebrate their special day.

### School Uniform Support

During the summer, families can apply to our school uniform scheme, which provides brand new uniform and school supplies for their children. This support helps alleviate the financial burden of back-to-school expenses, ensuring that every child has the essentials they need to start the school year confidently.

### Christmas Grotto

Our Christmas Grotto offers parents and caregivers who are struggling the opportunity to choose Christmas gifts for their children so no child wakes up without a gift on Christmas morning.



## Our Impact

Our referral partners recognise the critical support Sebby's Corner provides. An impressive 85.7% stated that "Sebby's Corner is a lifeline to my organisation," and 97.6% view us as a "vital resource to my families." All partners affirmed that we help babies and children get an equal start in life, improve parents' and carers' mental health, and relieve financial burdens. Furthermore, 95.2% noted that we support child development, while 90.5% believe we help reduce the attainment gap. Importantly, 97.6% reported that families feel supported and less isolated due to our interventions.

The feedback from families reflects these positive evaluations. A notable 100% reported feeling supported and acknowledged that our services improved their situations. Families indicated that our support allowed them to allocate funds to other necessities, with all participants stating that it improved their mental health. Moreover, 87.5% shared that our assistance made them feel less alone, emphasising the emotional support we provide alongside tangible resources.

### Real-Life Stories

The impact of Sebby's Corner is evident in the stories of the families we serve. One teacher informed us about a family whose older children had missed school for a week because their mother couldn't safely leave the house with all her children. We provided her with a sling to help carry her baby, making it possible for the children to go back to school. In another case, a mother told us that she hadn't eaten for two



days as she couldn't afford food for both herself and her daughter. After receiving essential items, toiletries, a supermarket voucher, and a referral to her local food bank, she felt more able to cope and a plan for how to access support in the future. We also helped a mother who was sharing a mattress with her baby. By sourcing a proper bed and crib, we improved their living conditions and ensuring safe sleep.

"I want to say a huge "Thank You" for the wonderful work that your organisation and volunteers do. In my job as a Perinatal Specialist Mental Health Nurse, my colleagues and I are often working with pregnant women and mothers with babies with significant social problems and some women who are refugees who have no recourse to public funds. The impact of the above significantly increased with the cost of living crisis. The support I have been able to access from your service has made things a little easier for the women I work with and their families. This practical support has made my job easier; it has allowed me to focus on the woman's mental health and treatment. Thank you so much for the great and invaluable work that you do."

**Debbie Hunter, Perinatal Specialist Mental Health Nurse, Brent and Harrow**

## Essentials Support

Families can be referred to our Essentials Support Programme to access a wide range of essential resources, including clothing, baby equipment, nappies, toiletries, buggies, and other necessities for their children. They have the flexibility to choose items in person, allowing them to select what best meets their needs, or they can opt for pre-packed items prepared by our volunteers. This tailored support not only alleviates the immediate financial pressures and worries but also empowers families by providing them with the tools they need to care for their children. Families can be referred to us again in four months time if they still need support.

Referrals come to us from a range of different professionals, including midwives, social workers, teachers, family support workers and health visitors. In the past year, we have supported families across every London Borough, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Essex.

The demand for our Essentials Support Programme has grown substantially, with referrals increasing by 85.1% in the past year. This sharp rise highlights the urgent need for our services, and illustrates the huge number of families still affected by the cost of living crisis and other financial pressures who are struggling to make ends meet.



Reporting period: 01/11/2023 - 31/10/2024

"I just wanted to thank you for the package I picked up a few weeks ago. I mentioned that my daughter had started her period and was really struggling. The lovely lady giving me my package gave me a few period pants for her to try. It would of never crossed my mind but they have been a life changer for her! She is so much more confident and comfortable with them and now even wears them to school when her period is due just in case. Just wanted to let you know how much we appreciate it."

**Family A, Barnet**



## Birthday Club

At Sebby's Corner, our Birthday Club helps families who might otherwise struggle to celebrate their child's birthday. We provide gifts, a cake, decorations, and balloons to make each birthday a joyful and memorable day. Over the past year, our Birthday Club has grown by 119%, a sign of just how many families need this support—and how committed we are to reaching them.

This year, we're thrilled to have partnered with ZSL London Zoo's Community Access Scheme, allowing us to gift each birthday child and their family a special day at the zoo. For many, this is a rare and magical experience. Families have shared how much the visit means to them and how these happy memories last far beyond the day itself.

Our Birthday Club is about much more than a celebration. It brings moments of happiness, strengthens family bonds, and lifts a little of the financial and emotional weight these families carry.

Total number of children supported

**144**

Average value of items each birthday child receives:

**£126.87**

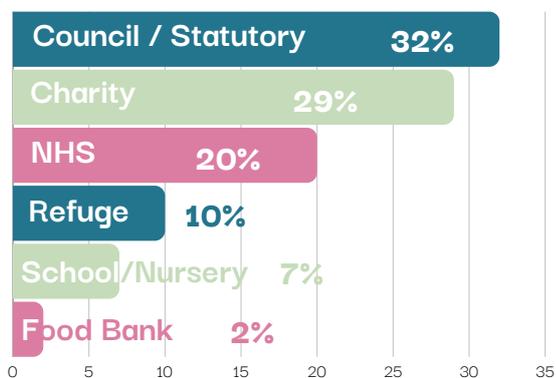
Total Value of Birthday Club items distributed

**£18,269.28**

Average age of birthday child

**7**

Where do Birthday Club referrals come from?



Reporting period: 01/11/2023 - 31/10/2024

"Thank you so much for putting an appeal out for the Ronaldo t-shirt. I was touched when you rang me to say you were taking on the challenge. I was blown away when I picked them up yesterday. He will be thrilled to open it on his birthday.

You continue to be so very generous at Sebby's Corner. You make so many children's birthdays into very special occasions. Thank you so much for being there for so many families, and for helping us to make their birthdays and their stay with us a little easier and more fun! With grateful thanks to you, your amazing team, and your generous supporters."

**Vicky Slater, Children's Support Worker, Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge**



## School Uniform

In August, we ran our School Uniform support programme to help families prepare for the new school year. We provided 164 children with everything they needed to start school with confidence, including new uniforms, shoes, backpacks, lunchboxes, stationery, swimwear, and PE kits. After hearing from our referral partners that some children were unable to complete homework because they didn't have paper to write on, we also included notepads to ensure they were fully prepared for both school and homework. By working directly with families to understand each child's specific needs, we were able to offer a tailored service, providing the exact sizes, colours, and items each child required.

The children we supported came from 55 different schools, spanning from nursery through to year 13. For many families, the cost of these essentials can be overwhelming, and our programme gave them some much-needed relief. Families shared how proud their children felt arriving at school in new shoes, feeling the same as their friends. It's a small detail, but for these children, it makes a big difference in feeling included and confident. Beyond providing essentials, this initiative helps children start the new school year feeling prepared, confident, and just like their friends.



Reporting period: 01/11/2023 - 31/10/2024

"What an incredible bag of lovely school uniform and other goodies for my daughter - she particularly loved the lunchbox and pencil case! Thank you so much for your generosity and kindness and taking away so much of the financial burden of buying school uniform, which without you guys would have been very difficult and stressful. We are so grateful to all of you, and can't wait for her to start nursery looking so smart and grown up!"



**Family T, Hertfordshire**

## Christmas 2023

Last Christmas, we were thrilled to support 1,727 children through our Grotto, where families struggling to afford gifts could come and select presents free of charge. Each family was given 10 points per child, with each toy carrying a points value. This allowed parents to choose gifts that suited their children's interests and gives them back the choice and dignity that financial hardship can often strip away. We created a warm and inviting atmosphere, ensuring a memorable experience for both families and volunteers.

For families facing particularly difficult circumstances, we provided a £25 supermarket voucher to help with Christmas lunch, allowing them to enjoy a festive meal together. Every parent who visited the Grotto also received a small gift for themselves, as they often put their children's needs first and to give them a much needed boost.

In addition to the families who visited us, we supplied bulk toys to other organisations supporting large groups of children, including those in asylum seeker contingency hotels. This allowed us to extend our support to families who were unable to physically get to the Grotto. Our Christmas support provided more than just gifts; it offered families a chance to celebrate the season without added financial worry and helped create special memories to carry into the new year.



Reporting period: 01/11/2023 - 31/12/2023

"I apologise for not emailing you earlier to express our gratitude for your incredibly generous donation of Christmas gifts for refugees and asylum seekers. The joy and warmth these gifts brought during the holiday season were immeasurable, and your support has not only provided material comfort but also sent a message of care and solidarity to the refugee community. Once again, thank you for your compassion and for being a beacon of hope for those in need."



**Farida Stanikzai, Operations Manager, New Citizens' Gateway**

## Volunteers

Volunteers are at the core of Sebby's Corner - without them we would be unable to help the sheer number of families we support every week. Their roles include sorting donations and packing referrals, ensuring that families receive the best possible support from us.

Overall, we have a remarkable 543 volunteers, with 103 of them actively contributing in the past three months alone. Together, they have logged over 1,000 volunteer hours in the past six months.

In addition to our regular volunteers, we also host corporate volunteering days, where teams from various companies come to lend a hand. In the lead-up to Christmas, we benefited from 760 corporate volunteer hours, significantly boosting our capacity to prepare for the festive season.

Our volunteers do not just assist with logistics; they also play a vital role in our fundraising efforts, helping to collect essential donations of preloved items within their communities. Their passion and dedication are integral to the work we do at Sebby's Corner.



"Volunteering with Sebby's was an incredibly humbling but rewarding experience; on one hand the team of volunteers and I felt quite emotional seeing how little some others have and how much they rely on the help that Sebby's provide, while on the other hand it's a great feeling knowing the that work you're doing with Sebby's is going a small way to helping those most in need especially at Christmas time when we volunteered."

**Apollo Syndicate Management Limited**

## Future Plans

### Partnership with Citizens Advice Barnet

Launching in January, we will be collaborating with Citizens Advice Barnet to offer families sessions with a specialist adviser. The adviser will be in our hub every week and will offer advice on benefits, debt, immigration and employment. This initiative focuses on creating long-term solutions to their issues, beyond just providing practical support with items.

### Expanded Partner Sessions

We aim to collaborate with other organisations and individuals to offer additional sessions at our hub, including activities like baby classes, breastfeeding advice and children's haircuts, all free of charge for struggling families. For so many families these activities are beyond their means.

### Formula Subscription Service

We plan to explore a formula subscription service to assist families facing high costs for formula, especially those who cannot wait the four month period between referrals. We often hear stories of how families water down formula to make it last and want to find ways to combat this heartbreaking problem.

### Gift-in-Kind Partnerships

We seek to establish more partnerships with brands to secure gift-in-kind stock, enhancing our resources for families in need.

### Growth of the Birthday Club Programme

We intend to expand our Birthday Club programme to reach more children. We plan to do to this by raising awareness in the community and amongst our referral partners of this brilliant service.

### Diversifying the School Uniform Programme

We aim to expand the number of schools whose children we support by building connections with new schools in particularly deprived areas.

