# London's baby banks surge as Great Big Baby Shower spans 25 NHS maternity units across 23 boroughs



The Camden New Journal’s call to back a local baby bank has again demonstrated the power of community generosity. After an earlier feature warned of a nappies shortage, readers responded with an outpouring of donations and even substantial cash gifts. Emily Compston, Little Village’s operations director, said the support “means so much to the families we support, especially new parents who are trying to give their babies the best possible start in life during what can be a really tough time.” The charity has long worked to provide essential items—nappies, clothing, prams and more—to families in need, with volunteers and supporters repeatedly described as the backbone of its work. The Guardian’s profile of London’s baby banks in 2018 framed Little Village as a pioneering, volunteer-driven model that emphasised dignity, choice and local community support, a legacy that continues to shape its approach today and underpins the current response from CNJ readers. Emily Compston’s gratitude and the sense of shared purpose reflect a broader shift in how communities respond to hardship, turning news interest into tangible relief for newborns and their parents.

The immediate impact of the appeal has been striking. As well as the in-person donations to Hampstead Road, readers have contributed clothing and baby essentials, with one unnamed donor delivering a £300 cheque in person—a gesture the charity said would “go such a long way in providing nappies and wipes for newborns.” The CNJ report noted volunteers and staff had recently welcomed waves of new supporters, and described Little Village’s ongoing push to rally resources ahead of autumn and winter. In parallel, the charity has been expanding a London-wide initiative designed to keep babies supplied during the busiest months of the year. The Great Big Baby Shower now spans 25 NHS maternity units across 23 boroughs, delivering emergency newborn packs that include nappies, sleepsuits, baby grows, muslins and maternity pads, with hundreds of packs anticipated in 2025 and more than 700 planned to date. Yet organisers emphasise the need for continued donations of clothing and funds to meet demand as the season changes and economic pressures persist.

Beyond the local appeal, the scale of demand facing Little Village and similar organisations has continued to rise. BBC coverage highlighted the changing landscape for families in need, noting that Little Village assisted 9,201 children in the preceding year and distributed tens of thousands of essentials—5,820 coats and almost 40,000 pairs of pyjamas among them. The piece underscored shortages of warm clothing for older children and described how previously vulnerable families now receive practical, dignity-preserving support. For families engaging with Little Village, the process relies on referrals from professionals through a network of midwives, health visitors and social workers, with self-referral not accepted; items may be collected at one of the hubs or delivered, and a daily referral cap helps manage demand while preserving the charity’s ability to respond quickly. Speaking about the work, the BBC interviewees stressed that baby banks are about neighbours helping neighbours, a sentiment echoed in Little Village’s own materials and in related reporting that has long chronicled the charity’s mission to relieve poverty by empowering families with real choice and support. The organisation’s own Get Help page outlines the referral pathway and emphasises the dignity and autonomy of families as they select the items they need.

Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/kind-hearted-new-journal-readers-heed-call-for-nappies), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/dec/08/baby-banks-london-volunteers-mothers-povery)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/kind-hearted-new-journal-readers-heed-call-for-nappies), [[2]](https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/kind-hearted-new-journal-readers-heed-call-for-nappies), [[5]](https://littlevillagehq.org/news/little-village-reaches-every-maternity-unit-in-london-with-emergency-newborn-packs/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpvn49kjrl9o), [[6]](https://littlevillagehq.org/get-help/)

Source Panel (for reference only; original articles appear separately):

* Camden New Journal article: Kind-hearted New Journal readers heed call for nappies
* Guardian profile: Baby banks – London volunteers, mothers and poverty
* BBC News feature: Little Village and rising need in London
* Little Village feature: The Guardian’s London baby banks profile (2018)
* Little Village press release: Great Big Baby Shower across NHS maternity units
* Little Village: Get Help page (referral and service model)
* Little Village: Donate Stuff and donation logistics pages

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/kind-hearted-new-journal-readers-heed-call-for-nappies> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/kind-hearted-new-journal-readers-heed-call-for-nappies> - Camden New Journal reports a surge of donations to Little Village, a London-based baby bank. The article recalls the charity’s earlier feature warning of nappies shortages and describes volunteers and supporters responding with generosity. A reader, unnamed, delivered a £300 cheque to Hampstead Road headquarters, illustrating the impact of what readers read in the CNJ. Emily Compston, Little Village operations director, thanks supporters and emphasises the relief their nappies and wipes provide new parents under pressure. Reporters visited the charity to hear volunteers’ experiences, and organisers say they still need donations of clothing and funds ahead of autumn and winter.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpvn49kjrl9o> - BBC News reports that Little Village, a London charity operating baby banks, is struggling to keep up with rising demand. The charity assisted 9,201 children during the year, supplying clothing, nappies, bedding and other essentials, with 5,820 coats and almost 40,000 pairs of pyjamas distributed in the last 12 months. Angela Basso, the head of fundraising, describes growing need over the past 18 months and notes shortages of warm clothing for three to five-year-olds. The piece highlights families who previously had nothing receiving bundles of essential items, and calls on the public to support donations to alleviate hardship for families.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/dec/08/baby-banks-london-volunteers-mothers-povery> - The Guardian article profiles London's 'baby banks', featuring Little Village as a pivotal example. It follows families referred to the charity and describes how volunteers sort donations, offer choices, and provide items from nappies to bedding in a dignified setting. Sophia Parker, founder, explains that baby banks are about families helping families within local communities. The piece highlights the emotional relief when families receive support, with parents able to attend sessions and select items they need. It also discusses the broader poverty context in London, noting that baby banks operate across several boroughs and assist thousands of children annually today.
5. <https://littlevillagehq.org/news/little-village-reaches-every-maternity-unit-in-london-with-emergency-newborn-packs/> - Little Village announces a major London-wide initiative, the Great Big Baby Shower, supplying emergency newborn packs to NHS maternity units. The programme now provides packs across 25 hospitals in 23 boroughs, containing nappies, sleepsuits, baby grows, muslins and maternity pads from the charity’s baby banks. The drive aims to distribute hundreds of packs during 2025, with over 700 packs expected, marking a substantial rise on prior years. London’s birth statistics are cited, underscoring Child Poverty challenges. Chief Executive Sophie Livingstone emphasises the need for practical support for new parents, while midwives report that the packs strengthen trust with families everyday.
6. <https://littlevillagehq.org/get-help/> - Get Help explains how Little Village supports families through a network of baby banks across London. Referrals come from professionals such as midwives, health visitors or social workers; self-referrals are not accepted. The organisation emphasises that helpers arrange delivery or allow families to select items at one of their hubs, including nappies, wipes, clothing and baby equipment. A current daily referral cap is noted to manage demand, with the referral window opening at 9:30am on working days. The page also directs readers to further resources and signposting for families in need. The tone emphasises dignity, choice and community support today.
7. <https://littlevillagehq.org/donate-stuff-2023/donate-stuff-at-your-nearest-donation-point/> - Donate Stuff explains how supporters can contribute to Little Village by post, collection or at local donation points. The page highlights four London hubs and additional drop-off spots, with opening hours and accessibility details. It stresses the importance of high-quality, pre-loved items that are suitable for gifting to families. It also invites people to donate fixed sums such as £32 to fund a newborn month’s care. The message reinforces the charity’s ethos of gifts rather than handouts and underscores the real-life impact of donations on young families facing hardship. Every contribution helps sustain services, staffing and local stock for families.