



Love, Amelia



Our Impact in 2021

Registered Charity Number: 1182062

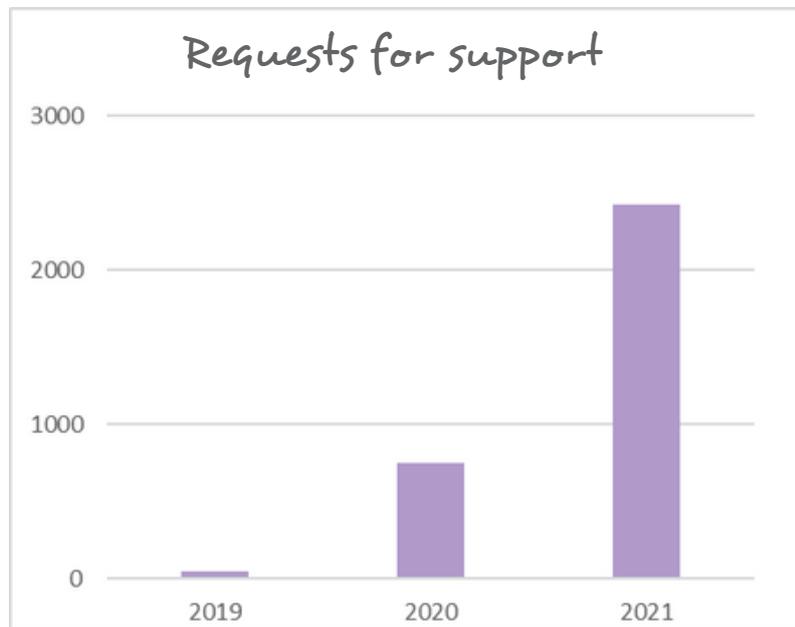
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Requests for support

The rates of childhood poverty continue to rise and in 2021 approximately 37% of children in Sunderland and South Tyneside have been identified as living in poverty. This is higher than the national average. Families with at least one child under the age of 3 are at the highest risk of poverty. In the North East, 42% of these families are living in poverty which is the highest rate in the UK outside of inner London.

This year we have supported more people in our community than ever before, with an increase of 222% in referral requests when compared with 2020. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, cuts to welfare support, rise in the cost of living are all contributory factors to the deepening childhood poverty.



Trend of bundles distributed each month in 2021



Sources:

DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2021).

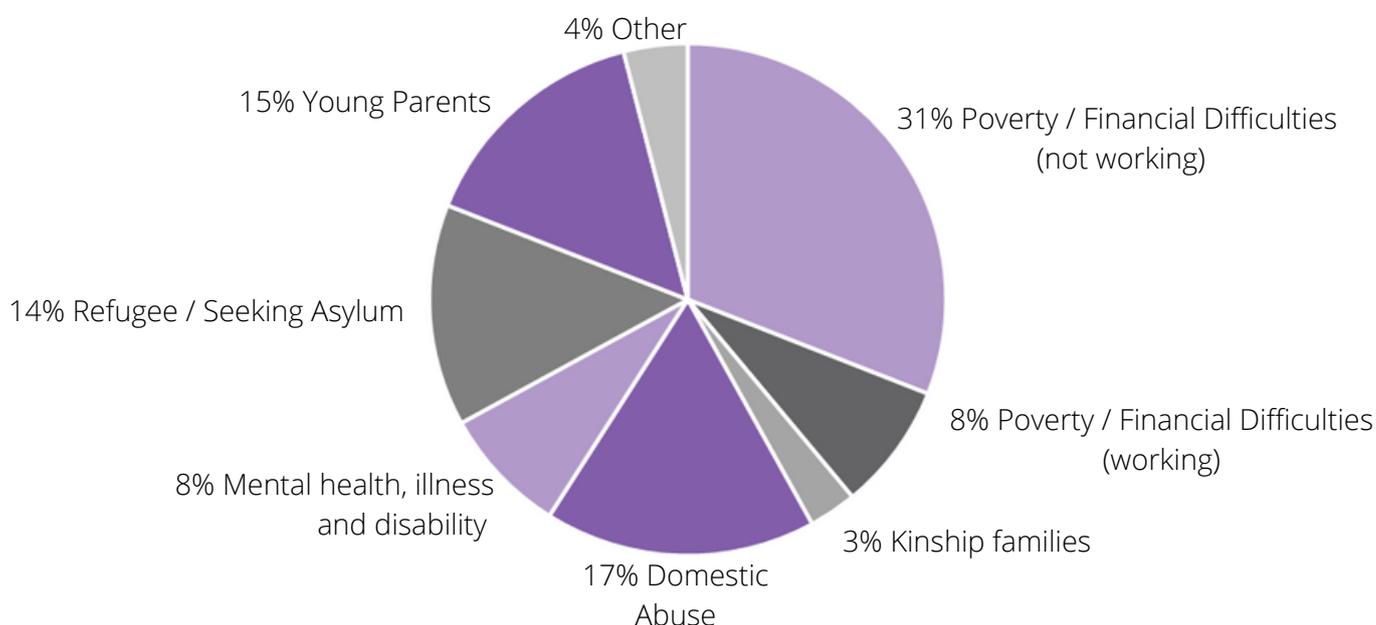
End Child Poverty <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/>

Bradshaw, J. Child Poverty in the North East Region. January 2020. Child Poverty Action Group. <https://cpag.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/report/child-poverty-north-east>

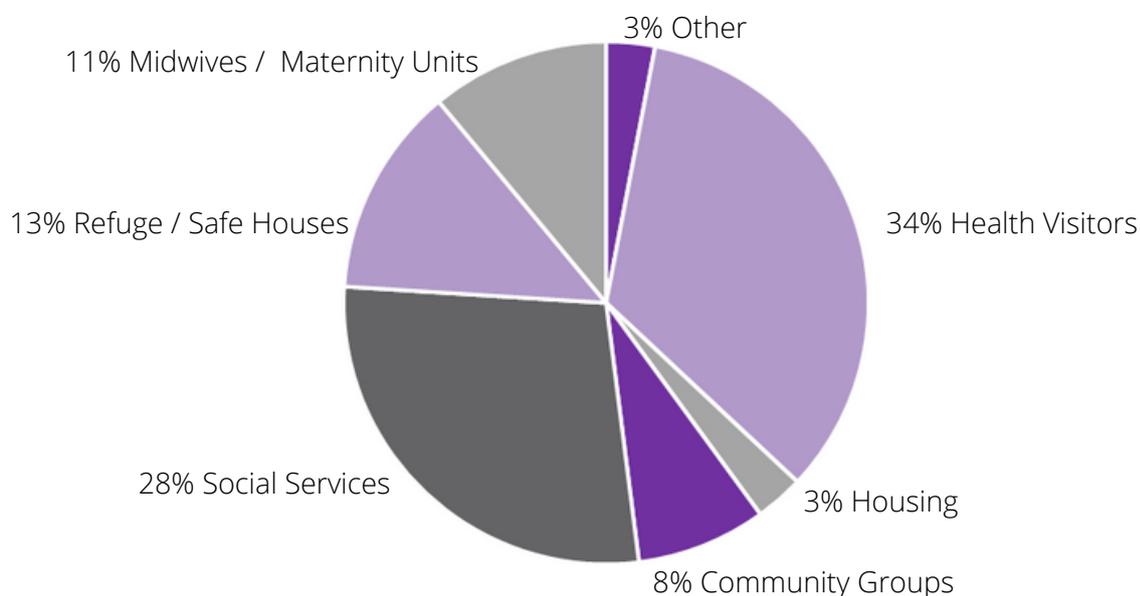
Who we supported and why

We support families who are in need for a variety of reasons which is usually related to poverty, illness or crisis. Whilst there are many factors which remain consistent from previous years, we have seen changes in the primary reason families are being referred to Love, Amelia for support. Low income is naturally a key factor however this year we have seen a rise in working families being referred to us. There has also been a rise in the number of families with mental ill health and families seeking asylum. Love, Amelia responded to the need for support as a result of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and were part of the local authority pathway to provide essential items to families who were resettled in the area. Families without access to public funds find it particularly difficult to provide the essentials their children need. The primary reasons families are referred to Love, Amelia are highlighted here:

Primary reason for referral in 2021 (%)



Referring agency in 2021 (%)



Our year in numbers

2426
Bundles
Distributed

£233,874
worth of items
distributed

152
Referral
Partners

4,372
Social Media
Following

180,683
Social Media
Reach

750
Christmas
Bags

110
Summer
Activity
Packs

142
Mother's Day
Gifts

34
Father's Day
Gifts

24
Volunteers

362
Clothing
Bundles

152
Baby / Child
Toiletry
Packs

2,517
Volunteer
Hours

84
Parents
Toiletry
Packs

140
Sanitary
Packs

291
Packs of
Nappies

71
Pairs of
Shoes

63
Bottle &
Breastfeeding
Packs

78
Prams /
Strollers

126
Food / formula
Bundles

35
Highchairs

159
Safer Sleep
Bundles

185
Bedding
Packs

140
Toy Bundles

87
Book
Bundles

299
Home Safety
Equipment

58
Swings /
Bouncers &
Playmats

400+
Other items

Our impact with the community

In July 2021 we found a new home in Hendon, as we moved to an industrial unit which has enabled us to extend the service we offer up to children aged 11 years. This comes following feedback from the community and our referral partners which highlighted a gap in services for this age group. We are very proud to have received multi year support from The National Lottery Reaching Communities grants which made it possible to move to a larger premises and support more families in need.



Julie Elliott MP
Standing up for Sunderland Central

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Dear Resident

I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of Sunderland Central Labour Party to thank all of our key workers, NHS staff, carers, teachers, shopworkers, bus drivers, and everyone else who played a vital role in keeping us safe and providing essential services throughout the pandemic. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

Everyone has made such enormous sacrifices to save lives and protect our NHS. Unfortunately, I have encountered hundreds of cases of people falling through the net of Government support. If there is anything I can help you with,

'Love, Amelia' is a baby bank based in Sunderland. The charity was founded by local mam Steph Archbold in memory of her daughter Amelia. Steph and the team at 'Love, Amelia' are passionate about supporting local families through hardship. They take donations of new and pre-loved baby items and gift them to families who need them most across Sunderland and South Tyneside. I am very proud to be a patron of this local charity, alongside my fellow parliamentary colleagues, Sharon Hodgson and Bridget Phillipson.

It was a pleasure to visit the team at 'Love, Amelia' to see some of the wonderful work they do in action. Steph and the team showed me around their unit in Hendon, it was so heartening to see how much stock had been kindly donated by the community. They provide an amazing service for families when they're at their most vulnerable. For referrals or to get in touch, please visit loveamelia.org.uk or call 07394 878432.



Packing Father's Day gift bags with Steph Archbold from the 'Love, Amelia' Baby Bank.

I'm looking forward to getting out and about in our communities over the coming weeks and months again, taking up our issues and listening to your concerns. Please consider completing the survey in this newsletter to share your views with me.

We are proud to have the support from Julie Elliott MP for Sunderland Central who is a proud patron for Love, Amelia. Julie has visited us again in 2021 where we could update her on our work and how we continue to support families in the community. Julie visited and helped pack gift bags which were distributed on Father's Day. Julie has recently shared her support for Love, Amelia with local residents in a leaflet distributed in the constituency.

It is the heart-breaking reality that many babies go hungry as families struggle with the rising cost of formula. We have received requests for support stating babies were without milk throughout the night and families had no money to purchase formula to feed their children. We ensure families are aware of the Healthy Start scheme however many families were unable to subsidise the remaining costs. With no plan for emergency provision of formula, and foodbanks no longer distributing formula for children, many babies were going hungry. We took action to change this and worked collaboratively with Healthwatch Sunderland and Public Health team at Sunderland City Council to implement a crisis plan to ensure families can access formula 24/7. Families who are in crisis and without access to formula, can now contact the Customer Support Network (0191 5205551) 24/7 and will be supported with a voucher for formula and welfare support. Our aim is for this to be made available in the other local authorities we support.

Working in partnership with...



Our impact with the community

We are very proud to be chosen as the winner of the Influence and Collaboration Award in the Voluntary & Community Action Sunderland (VCAS) Open Arms Awards 2021.

This award recognises the commitment and impact of organisations and individuals who, through the ability to engage with and enthuse others, have added significant and long lasting value to the community.

Love, Amelia was voted as the winner of this award by members of the community and our team are delighted and very grateful for the recognition and support from the community.



Our impact with families

Feedback from the families highlights the key benefits and impact Love, Amelia has had on their life:



Meeting basic needs of their children -

100% of families agree the items provided by Love, Amelia have helped meet their child's basic needs. This includes having a safe place to sleep, suitable clothes to be warm and dry, toiletries and nappies to be clean and healthy, appropriate equipment to feed.



Helping children to be safe and happy -

90% of families agree the items provided by Love, Amelia have helped to keep their children safe. This includes provision of safe sleeping equipment, home safety kits, stair gates. Families also report the items have promoted their child's development, wellbeing and overall happiness.



Clean and good quality items-

100% of families agree the items provided by Love, Amelia were clean and in good, quality condition. All agree the items they received were well presented. Great care is taken with each bundle we prepare as we want all families to feel they are receiving a gift, not a hand out.



Improving budgeting priorities and reducing risk taking behaviour -

96% of families agree the items provided have helped to ease the difficult choices about how to spend limited funds and deterred away from risk taking behaviours (borrowing money from family or high interest loans, loan sharks, crime). Parents are able to use their limited funds on other items such as food, heating and housing.



Improving parental wellbeing -

100% of families agree the items provided by Love, Amelia have helped to reduce their stress and worries about providing for their child. Improving parental wellbeing enables them to have clear headspace to plan ahead for the future and help become more resilient.



Recommended service -

100% of families state they would recommend Love, Amelia to another family in need of support for their children.

Feedback from families

"I will be forever grateful for the help I have had from you for my little boy. I cried every night because I couldn't provide for him and didn't know how I would feed him or make sure he had nappies. I have been struggling on my own for so long and so many days I have went without food only keeping radiators turned on in his room and keeping me warm with blankets to save on heating because I couldn't afford it. Some days we didn't leave the house because his clothes didn't fit properly and sometimes had to go without a nappy at home. I have had help from you a few times now and you have changed my life. One day I want to give back and help others like you helped me. Thank you for everything"

"I can't put in to words how grateful I am for the things you have given me. I never thought I would need to come to a charity for help but this year I have been desperate. Everything was so beautiful I couldn't believe it was all for me. The pram was absolutely beautiful I feel so proud when I'm out with the bairn. You're are a godsend and I want to give back to help families like you helped me"

"During the last few months my family wouldn't have been able to get by without the support we have received from Love, Amelia. The support has given me the ability to look after and keep my daughter safe, clean, and fed, not to mention everything in between"

"Thank you for helping me give my baby a chance"

"Thank you for everything that you do. You provide a fantastic service and its good to know there is still some good in the world. I never wanted to be in the position that I am, but me and my children are free, safe and ready to start rebuilding our life. I can't put in to words how much you have helped me and my children and how grateful we are for helping us in our time of need. Thank you for giving us a fresh start"

"I was at my lowest point knowing I couldn't give the kids what they needed and I was too embarrassed to ask for help but I am so pleased I did. Everything we got was beautiful and the little extra's were really thoughtful I always put the kids first so I didn't have a lot for me so getting something as simple as shampoo and bubble bath made my day. I never felt judged and I am so grateful for that"

"Her face lights up when she see's the box knowing there is something amazing inside. To her its a gift like some new clothes or toys, but to me its peace of mind that she has what she needs as I know I can't afford these things. Thank you for helping put that smile on her face"

Our impact with professionals

We work closely with many professionals working in the area and value their feedback to help us improve our service for the families we support.



Quick response to referrals and supportive staff -

100% of professionals agree the response time to the referral was quick and the staff from Love, Amelia were friendly and helpful



Meeting basic needs of the child-

100% of professionals agree the items provided by Love, Amelia were appropriate to the age of the child and helped to meet their basic needs.



Quality items and presented with dignity -

100% of professionals agree the items were in good, clean quality condition and well presented. Professionals commented that the packaging of bundles promoted dignity to the families receiving them.



Safe at home -

98% of professionals agree that where applicable, the items provided by Love, Amelia helped to increase safety to the child at home. Providing equipment such as safety gates and home safety packs has reduced risk of accidental injury at home.



Improving child development and wellbeing -

99% of professionals agree the items provided by Love, Amelia have aided child development and improved the child's happiness and wellbeing.



Improving parental wellbeing -

98% of professionals agree the items provided by Love, Amelia have reduced parental anxiety and stress and reduced the risk of engaging in risk taking behaviour (such as borrowing money they can't pay back, loan sharks, crime).



Positive outcomes -

100% of professionals agree that Love, Amelia service has enabled them to engage in positive discussions with the family about the needs of the child.



Recommended service -

100% of professionals state they would recommend Love, Amelia to a colleague or family in need of support.

Feedback from professionals

"The families that I work with are on really low incomes and Love Amelia provide basic products so that families don't have to worry or take out high interest loans. The service I have had from Love Amelia has been amazing. The staff are so caring and understanding and I would highly recommend this service."

"These items have made a huge difference to the families, eased stress and financial pressure. The items were in new condition and beautifully presented which is lovely for the dignity of the family and the children and helps them feel less stigmatised. The discreet process also helps the family maintain their dignity. The items also will help support the family and children keep safe."

"Your service is so important. It has helped the families enjoy Christmas and reduced parents stress at a financially challenging time."

"Love Amelia have gone above and beyond to ensure that children within the area are provided with Christmas gifts when their family have been unable to provide due to low income and other welfare issues. The staff are so dedicated and hard-working and the gifts I was able to provide to the children I support were absolutely amazing and very thoughtful. Staff listened to my description of each child and what their interests were and went out of their way to find well matched appropriate gifts. The idea of providing wrapping paper and allowing the parent to wrap them is really empowering and the parents were delighted with this. Love Amelia staff should be very proud, keep up all the hard work!"

"All of the families I have received items for have all been extremely grateful, some have been overwhelmed at the generosity of the service i.e amount of items in the packs, the Christmas gifts received and the quality of the items. One woman unable to get over the fact that some clothing was brand new still with tags on. One mam was grateful at how quick she was given a crib at such short notice when the one she had been given was broken. All of the families referred are in financial need at the time so grateful for the items they otherwise may have been unable to afford or got themselves in debt for."

"The families that have been helped by Love Amelia, have always thanked myself and the service and been very impressed with the quality of the products and have been very thankful of the service helping them when things have been difficult for them."

"The service provided goes above and beyond. Not only responding to the request for practical support with equipment but demonstrating a kindness and personal touch to each referral that has been addressed. At Christmas all of the recipients were extremely grateful and for the children to have a gift to give to their parents was quite emotional. Baby equipment so well considered and has given my young parent a positive outlook and chance to feel excited for the birth now."

"Preparing for baby coming can be anxiety provoking as parents can get overwhelmed with equipment and clothing they need to purchase particularly when they are on a low income. I recently provided my client with a baby bath that Love Amelia had donated. This alleviated stress with my client. I was able to incorporate this into a safe bathing demonstration for baby. My client was delighted and also feels less stressed and more prepared for baby's arrival. You have a fantastic service making a difference to the lives of our families we work with."

"Families are always so grateful for the things that Love Amelia provide for them and they go above and beyond to make sure that all members of the family, including parents are provided for."

"I had an emergency when a family were found to not have a cot for their 14 month old and within 3 hours, Love Amelia had provided a safe place for the child to sleep, reducing the child's risks and giving the family peace of mind their child was safe – she has slept independently since and mam is very grateful for this."

"This is a truly life changing organisation. The family I collected equipment for had literally nothing and not only did Love Amelia provide baby equipment but they showed human kindness by providing mum with personal items which made her feel special going in to hospital to have her baby."

"The families I referred both fled domestic violence and were struggling financially. This has been an enormous help to the Mothers as they could not afford a lot for their children. The service is fabulous. The staff are very friendly and very efficient."

"Our team are so grateful for the support we receive from Love Amelia. We have been supplied with a lot of baby gates which increases the safety of the children. For Christmas I sent referrals over for 18 families, all of which received a giant gift bag for them and their children. We have had comments from a family that they have been able to have the best Christmas with their child thanks to the presents they could give them. Love Amelia has been fundamental this year to our families supporting their children."

I referred for two single beds and mam appreciated these so much. She had her 3-year-old daughter sleeping in her bed since she was a baby as she couldn't afford to buy one. Her daughter loves having her own "big girl bed" and has slept in every night since.

"Many of our families wouldn't have had any presents at Christmas if it wasn't for Love, Amelia. They were all very grateful and commented how helpful they were. Especially coming with wrapping paper and a Christmas eve bag. It relieved a lot of pressure off our parents."

"All donations to the woman's refuge have been in immaculate condition and beautifully presented. Staff are always very friendly and respond quickly to requests. We have families here who have fled from domestic abuse and donations are greatly appreciated as often the families have had to flee in a hurry and have been unable to take any belongings with them. We received lovely age appropriate Christmas present for our customers who often have very little money to spare. This made a massive difference to the mothers who are struggling here and really made Christmas magical for them all."

"This is an amazing charity who supports the ongoing development and safety of children and young people. It helps bridge the gap between inequalities and provide opportunities for children to thrive. I've saw families brought to tears with the generosity of the charity and the support they have provided to families who are currently in need of additional support. I have also witnessed first-hand the impact this charity has on families."

The items are a lifeline to families who come in from abroad with nothing, it enhances the quality of life and keeps families safe, especially if sleeping equipment for babies.

"I work with homeless young families with complex needs and the support that we receive from Love, Amelia is amazing. We use Love, Amelia a lot as they have helped so many of our families in our service; This could be anywhere from clothing that parents can't afford out of their budget for the children and themselves, presents at Christmas to help take the strain off families not being able to afford to buy their children much, and providing cots for families which they can then take with them when they move into their own independent accommodation."

Acknowledgements



Thank You!

We would like to sincerely thank the individuals, companies and funding sources who have supported the Love, Amelia throughout 2021. We are very grateful for the contribution of every person who has enabled us to provide this vital service to babies and children experiencing hardship and deprivation.

We also thank our hardworking team of volunteers who dedicate their time to supporting families in need. Volunteers have helped to make a real difference by contributing their time and skills to further our charitable goals and support more families who in need of support.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the professionals and groups we work with throughout the year. We have the pleasure of working with so many inspiring people who go above and beyond for the families they are working with, offering an exceptional service, compassion and support. We want to thank them for all that they do for people in the community.

