



HARTLEPOOL BABY BANK – CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE AGM

Here at Hartlepool Baby Bank we like to do things a little differently and indeed a little more informally than at other charities, so I don't want to make a big deal of my role as Chair, other than to tell you. I have am one of the founding members of the Baby Bank and that being Chair is a source of great pride for me.

We started in February 2019, 3 mums with an idea that we wanted to help local families and what came next was a great adventure. We set some aims and I am proud that almost 4 years later they have not changed.

The aims of **Hartlepool Baby Bank** still remain

- To provide resources for families across Hartlepool with under 2's or who are pregnant. (With support to parents with older children as appropriate)
- To provide parent to parent, advice and support on feeding
- To provide a lending library of equipment
- To signpost families to help with housing, benefits or other community agencies as appropriate.
- To provide a safe space for parents to meet other parents and access community based support.

It has been wonderful to be able to spend the last year in Crown Buildings and to be better able to welcome families into the Baby Bank as Covid Restrictions reduced.

We have run three sessions a week Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays across the year, and we have been able to continue to deliver maternity packs and big items and provide an emergency out of hours service to those in need.

We have continued to attract grants and large donations amongst others
Albert Hunt £2000

County Durham Poverty Hurts £2000

TrustHouse £5400 a year for 3 years

National Lottery, £19,000 a year for 3 years

We reduced from two monthly donors to one as one gentleman had agreed to fund us for 12 months. However we have attracted some large regular donations.

As a team we have continued to develop, with new members joining the team. And what a team we are – coming from 5 countries and speaking 4 different main tongues.

We have worked hard to achieve our dream of becoming a village where families can support and help each other, as we knew that social isolation is rife amongst families with young children and so we have encouraged our users to become volunteers where possible. It's definitely a success story that our volunteers are either service users or their family members, as this shows the value in what we do.

This dream has been cemented by the news that on the 14th November 2023 we had been successful in receiving one of the inaugural Kings Awards for Voluntary Service. (KAVS) and this is proof of how amazing our volunteers are.

We have massively increased our media presence this year – changing from a mostly local presence to being asked to speak more on the National stage. Which has given us the chance to speak about child poverty, and the difficulties our families are facing along with challenging the government to provide more support for families. We have worked with SkyNews over several months on a campaign of formula awareness and safety.

General Media footage has continued to allow us to attract funding and donation opportunities. Including £1000 for being part of the Baby Bank on Us campaign with the sun.

As Chair I have continued to speak at conferences organised by Joseph Rowntree and the North East Child Poverty Commission (NECPC).

And we have continued to grow our relationship within the Voluntary and Community Sector and we are now entrenched in numerous projects and committees within Hartlepool including working with the borough council to shape their Family Hubs project delivery.

We have seen the benefit of partnership working with other local Baby Banks such as Stockton Baby Bank and Love, Amelia, which has allowed us to share stock and better support our families. We also work with other local charities to help them support families as necessary as well as seeing a measurable improvement in our

As we look towards the start of the next year which will soon be upon us, I am pleased with our financial position. We have given more support than ever, to a larger number of families and responded well to their growing needs. We have provided free sanitary items and toiletry packs to 1000s of families which although stretching us at times has provided a large amount of well being to families. We continue to attract grants to shore up our position and enable us to look to the future.

I remain grateful to the families of Hartlepool who have come forward to support us with their time, their items and their generosity. Without them we couldn't do what we do.

We know at Hartlepool Baby Bank that it takes a village to raise a child and as chair I'd like to say a personal thank you to everyone who has joined our village.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EDBruijn'.

Emilie de Bruijn

Chair