

'Baby Pack' toolkit for parishes within the Archdiocese of Birmingham

What is a baby pack?

A baby pack consists of essential mother-and-baby items which mothers-to-be can take with them into hospital before the baby's birth and for use in the first three months of the baby's life.

The essential items for the baby packs have been carefully drawn up by maternity health specialists and charities with experience of supporting vulnerable family groups.



Brushstrokes volunteers putting together a baby pack

The aim is to support volunteer groups and individuals wishing to take positive action to improve the physical and emotional health of mothers-to-be and their babies by offering the gift of baby essentials in a spirit of friendship and solidarity.

The mother-and-baby essentials can be donated singly or individuals and groups may wish to put together a pack of essential items. Schools and parish groups often come together, showing immense generosity of spirit in donating and putting together a baby pack or a number of packs.

Who is the baby pack for?

Baby packs are usually provided for mothers from hard-to-reach groups. The mothers may be identified by midwives, ante natal staff or health visitors.

They are particularly valued by the most vulnerable mothers and families from all backgrounds who may just be surviving with help from charities and foodbanks

The most excluded groups include mothers newly arrived to the UK. These include new refugees, asylum seekers and destitute migrants. The baby packs offer a way of reaching out to women who have been trafficked into the UK and then abandoned because they are going to give birth in a few months' time.

Some women seeking asylum in the UK may be entirely destitute, relying totally on support from others to survive.

Mothers from all these backgrounds face multiple disadvantages.

They often do not have emotional or financial support from friends and family to help them prepare for the baby's birth. They have no one who will pass on to them their own much cherished baby clothes and other items.

Mothers may be lone parents lacking the money to buy the most basic items for their babies or suffering such acute trauma that making everyday decisions is difficult.

These mothers are also at the most risk of neonatal mortality. They may lack knowledge of the UK perinatal services available to them and may fear being charged for NHS services.

Support from volunteers and groups who may also befriend the mothers-to-be is a much-needed service.

What items go into a baby pack?

Only new items are provided in the baby pack. They help to prevent the risk of infection to babies and also make the mothers feel pride in the gifts they have been given.

Knitted baby items including cardigans and blankets are always received with much delight from individual home knitters and knitting groups.

Toiletries and nappies for babies and mothers are also warmly welcomed

Essential items for the baby

- Baby sleep suits
- Vests
- Nappies
- Muslin cloths
- Towels
- Cardigans and warm outer garments
- Baby clothes
- Hats and mittens
- Baby sheets and blankets
- Baby toiletries
- Baby bottle

Essential Items for the mother

- Large strong bags for the baby pack items which can be used during the mothers stay in hospital
- Toiletries and sanitary products
- Towels

Optional items

- Baby toy (optional)
- Good wishes messages from the donors to mother and baby
- Health information approved by health professionals
- Contact details for approved charities and faith groups.



Who provides the Baby Packs?

Baby packs and items can be donated by both individuals and groups.

The estimated value of one baby pack is in the region of £55.

Some groups like to make up baby packs themselves. Others prefer to raise the funds for the mother and baby items and donate the money raised to a parish group or charity that can assemble the packs.

Who can put the packs together?

Baby packs can be put together by:

- Parishioners and parish groups
- Schools
- Community projects
- Charities and businesses
- Individuals

Who can receive Baby packs?

Baby packs may be donated directly to vulnerable mothers known to parishes or through parish groups such as the Union of Catholic Mothers or the St Vincent de Paul Society. The packs are donated with due regard to the safeguarding policies and procedures of the parish and the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Baby Packs can also be donated in other ways.

For example through:

- Father Hudson's Care projects and associate charities. www.fatherhudsons.org.uk
- Hospital chaplains within local parishes
- Local maternity hospitals and antenatal community services
- GP practices
- Community groups and charities supporting vulnerable groups
- Children's centres
- Social work departments

The referral agencies pass them on to newcomer mothers in need of practical support.

Social Impact

The baby pack is a valued resource for isolated newcomers seeking sanctuary and other vulnerable mothers-to-be.

Providing a baby pack for mothers brings joy and reduces stress and anxiety.

Baby pack items help to reduce the risk to the physical health of the baby and neonatal mortality.

Providing baby packs brings hard to reach mothers into contact with their local parishes and communities. It reduces their social isolation.

Most importantly it can provide new possibilities for engagement, support and friendship offered to the most vulnerable in our society.

For more information or support, contact:

Teresa Clements, Newcomer Co-ordinator, Father Hudson's Care

TeresaClements@fatherhudsons.org.uk

Mobile 07464 497417



Reaching out to provide social care in the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham

Contact:

Father Hudson's Care,
St George's House,
Gerards Way,
Coleshill,
Birmingham B46 3FG

01675 434000

enquiries@fatherhudsons.org.uk

www.fatherhudsons.org.uk

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