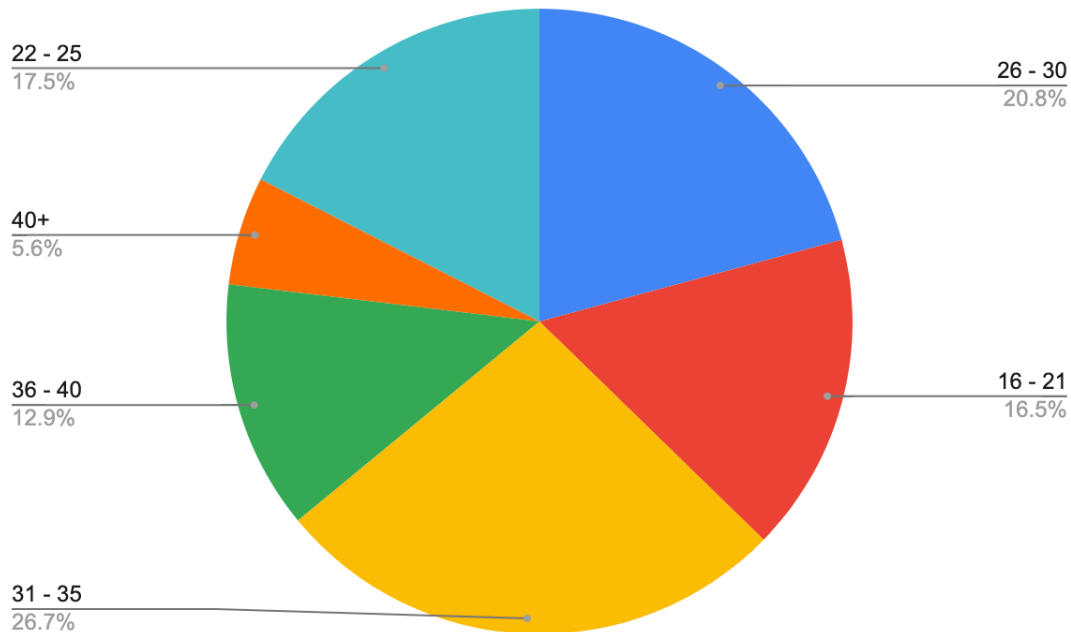


Bicester Baby Bank Annual Report 2022

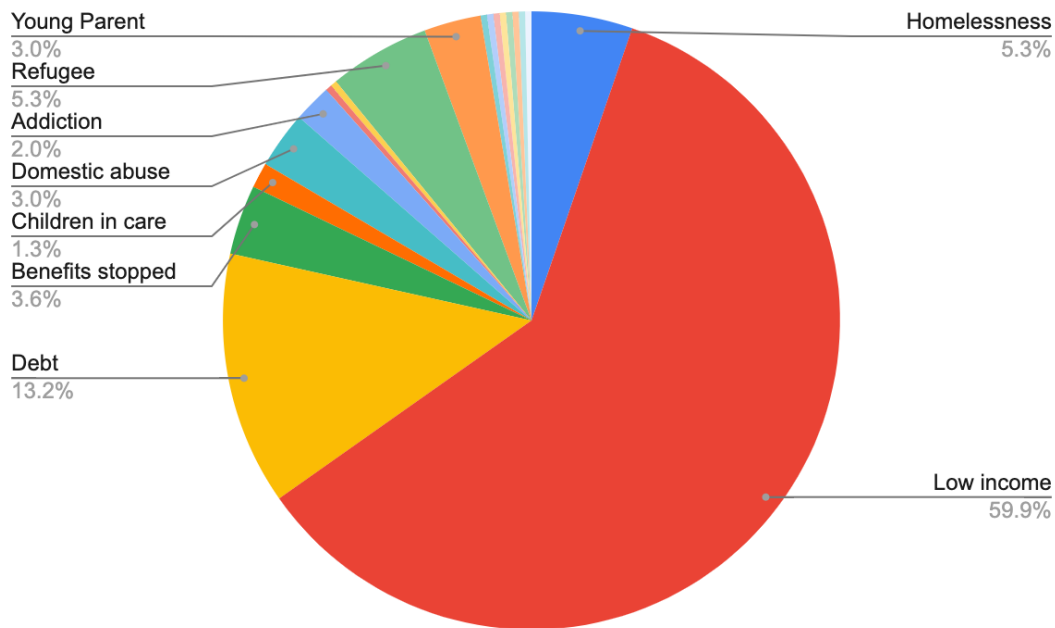
Referrals and the Reach of the Baby Bank in 2022

In 2022 the Bicester Baby Bank took **303 referrals** for families in the local area and supported over **650 children** . This is an increase of approximately 25% (59 referrals) on the previous year.



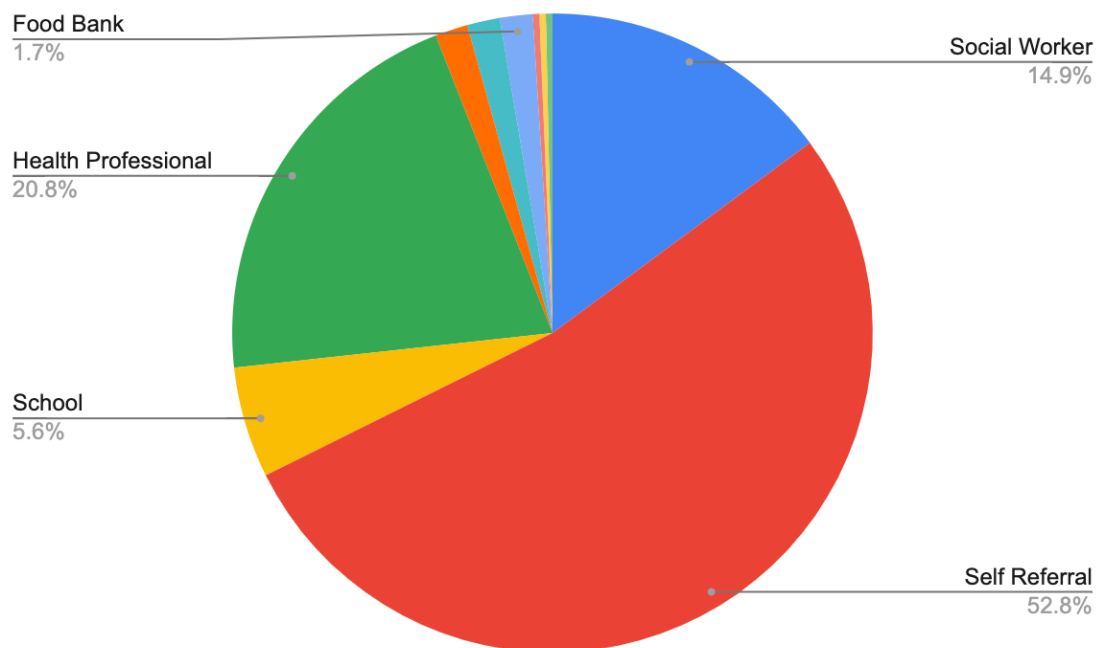
There was a dramatic increase in older parents seeking help in 2022, compounded by the cost of living crisis and energy crisis, which drove many parents who had previously never needed support to seek support for their families. In 2020 no parents over the age of 35 sought help from the baby bank, but this steadily increased across 2021 and 2022 and now nearly half of parents seeking support are over the age of 35.

The % of clients who reported they were experiencing domestic abuse declined in 2022 to 17% (down from 30% in 2021), however the number of clients experiencing mental health difficulties remained stable at 47% (vs. 48% in 2021). The prevalence of these factors in our client population contributed to our training focus for volunteers.

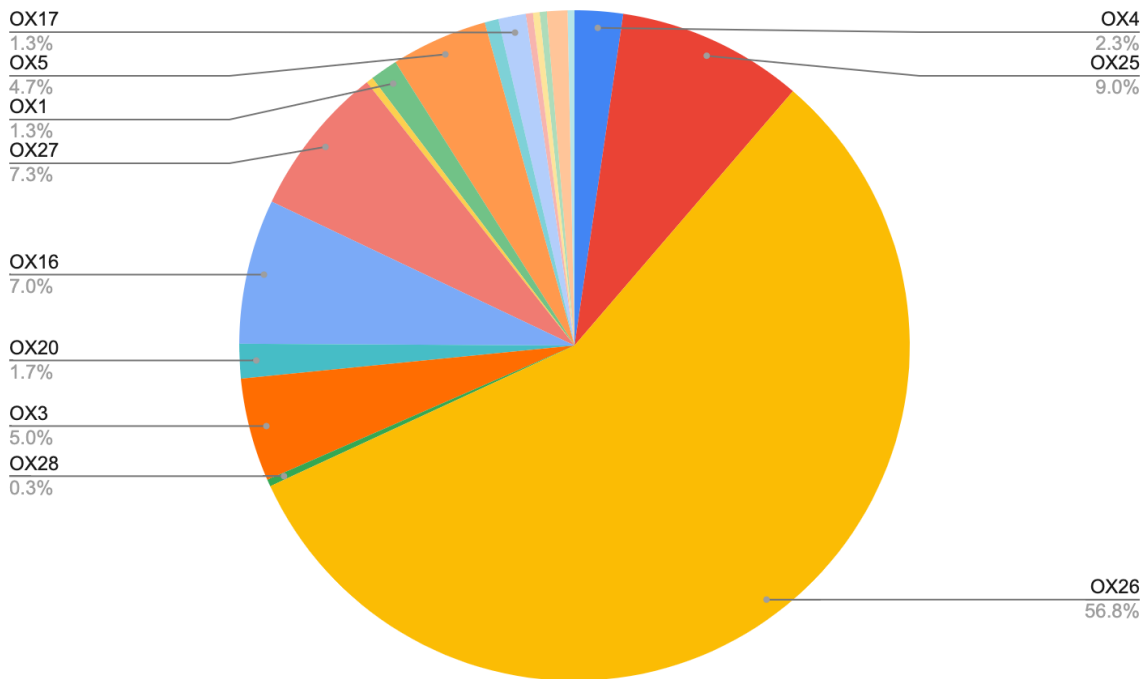


The number of referrals due to low income or debt increased in 2022 from 65% in 2022 to 73% in 2023. The most marked category of increase is that of refugees which was not a category in 2021 but in 2022 represented 5% of referrals, with the majority of refugees fleeing war in Ukraine and political unrest in Afghanistan. The majority of families seeking support are, as in previous years white British families, however our reach into different communities has increased and particularly into the refugee community.

Referral Network



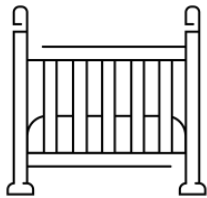
Self referrals increased again in 2022, and we reinstated a rule that families could self refer three times before needing a referral from a professional to ensure that we were directing our resources towards those most in need. We saw slight decreases in referrals from other agencies, with the exception of the Food Bank which sent through more referrals demonstrating the work that has been done to forge a strong local link between the two charities.



As with previous years the majority of referrals have come from Bicester and surrounding villages, however we have seen an increase in referrals from closer to Oxford, within the city of Oxford, and Kidlington.

Goods Distributed

Nearly all of our families received bundles of clothing, as well as the following:



39

Cots and cotbeds have been donated to families



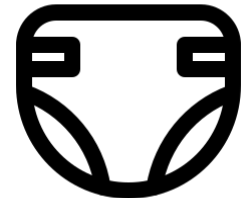
181

Sets of toiletries for babies, children and parents have been given out



74

Families have received formula milk



196

Families have received bundles of nappies



201

Families have received packs of baby wipes



30

Families have received pushchairs or buggies



34

Families have received school uniform for older children



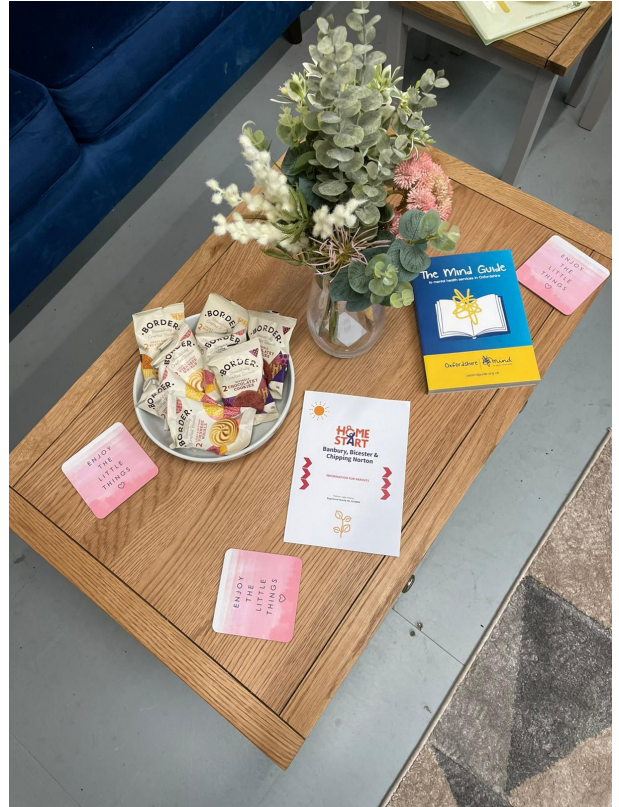
38

Families have received baby food

In 2022 we also expanded the reach of the baby bank, stocking clothing up to age 12 alongside school uniform. This was in response to many families who visited us having older children alongside younger children and babies.

Our Community Space

From the point we began to gather data about usage, 25% of families visiting us used our new community space, designed to be a place for families to sit, have a warm drink and discuss with our volunteers the difficulties they are experiencing and receive signposting to further community resources they can access for support.





Improving Our Storage Space

Using a grant we received from the Screwfix Foundation we have upgraded our storage area this year to put in place racking, allowing us to store equipment and goods more efficiently and making it easier to see the items we have available for families.



Links with Other Charities

During 2022 we have forged a strong link with the food bank, referring clients between our agencies where appropriate, and receiving donations to the baby bank from the food bank of goods we are in a position to distribute effectively (e.g. baby food, nappies, toiletries).

We referred 53 families on to further local services including Mind Oxfordshire, Nai's House, the Wellbeing Cafe and Community Cafe, Homestart, Talking Spaces, Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support, Community Fridge, Connections, Citizens Advice, Clean Slate and local social groups for parents and toddlers/babies. This demonstrates the work we have done this year to become informed about other local charities and their offerings, and to ensure that we are trying to support families not only with immediate needs, but also the underlying needs and circumstances which have led to them seeking help from the Baby Bank. By continuing this work we hope we can support more families in a holistic way, involving multiple agencies and charities to support them in addressing some of the underlying issues which contribute to the situation they are in.

Volunteer Training

In response to the needs of our clients we applied for and were successful in receiving a grant from the Bicester Village Make a Difference fund to train our volunteers in key areas. We organised a training day for our volunteers in early 2023 to train them on spotting the signs of domestic abuse, listening skills, and basic mental health first aid. This will allow our volunteers to listen and support our clients with confidence, and effectively refer them to services which can offer further support.

Events and Fundraising

We have done a number of fundraising and awareness raising events in 2022 as we emerge from Covid and into more face to face events again. These have included:

- Magic at Garth Park community event where we ran a teddy tombolo to raise funds
- Finmere Fright Night where we sold food, drink and halloween goodies
- A coat swap at a local school to support parents in finding a new winter coat
- A local Starbucks opening as nominated charity

Christmas Appeal

In 2022 we ran our Christmas appeal again, collecting gift bags with pyjamas, a book and some chocolate for different age groups to distribute to families in need. Alongside this we received donations of toys from Tesco's local collection and were able to offer families in need a selection of presents for their children.



