

# MERRY-GO-ROUND SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022



# Founders Welcome

*by Samantha Moir*



I set up Merry-go-round just over a decade ago with the idea that everyone should find it easy to find maternity, baby and children's goods that don't cost the earth. This meant supporting people to buy secondhand to reduce the environmental impact of buying new and also reducing the financial stress on families. Baby stuff can be so expensive, especially when things are only used for a short period of time.

The shop had to cater directly to the very people we were trying to appeal to, so it needed to be a welcoming, calming space where you could feed, change or just hang out if needs be.

A single idea has turned into a dedicated staff team of 15 and a steady stream of 6800 customers per year over the last 10 years. We have such a high throughput of items we are able to keep prices really low and even support 50 families per month with all they need for free. Our feeding and changing corner is now a bustling community space where 80 people come every week to meet others and, crucially, feel less isolated. On top of all that, we've created 15 paid jobs and now welcome 15 volunteers a month too.

Merry-go-round and everything we've achieved has surpassed all my original expectations. I'm so proud of our amazing staff and volunteers who put their heart and soul into our joint mission to support local families and protect the environment. For me, this is the real unexpected joy of Merry-go-round. This and the community we have created.

We couldn't do it without you: our community. Thank you for your generous donations, and endless support. Thank you for supporting local, for creating jobs, for helping to reduce our impact on the planet and for telling all your pals!

The pandemic was a huge challenge for us all, but your support didn't waver and the team at Merry-go-round worked harder than ever to ensure we were there for the community as soon as we could be.

This year has been our biggest and busiest ever. We're continuously reviewing and improving and we will grow with what our community needs. We have even more ideas up our sleeves and we can't wait to make them a reality. Welcome to our first social impact report, reporting on 2021-2022 and a little recap on the last 10 years.

*Samantha Moir*

# Mission Statement

Merry-go-round aspires to be the first choice for parents in Glasgow. Our boutique shop offers high quality, affordable pre-loved essential items as well as being a community hub for families to meet, learn, exchange ideas, relax and be supported. We're changing the perception of secondhand goods, saving families money, improving mental health and wellbeing, and reducing the quantity of new goods purchased.

## Objectives

To be the first choice and one stop baby shop for parents in Glasgow.

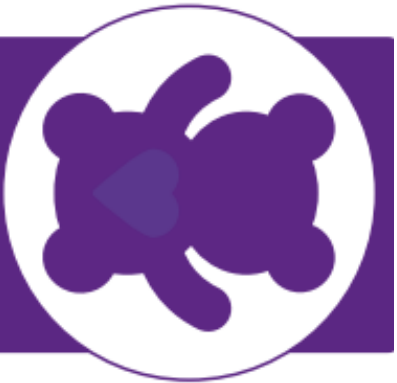
To provide a community-led social space for families.

To encourage families to recognise their environmental impact and reduce it.

To supply free goods to families who need them via our partners in the community.

To provide volunteering opportunities for people who want to gain new skills and meet friends.

# What we believe in and how we do it



Selling high-quality pre-loved goods at a low cost



Bringing families together in our community space to reduce isolation by providing free or low-cost events



Making it easy for our local community to reduce its carbon footprint



Supporting families through our Carousel programme, which provides high-quality goods to parents in need



Providing volunteering opportunities for people who want to gain new skills and make new friends



## Our shop

We stock quality second-hand baby, toddler, and maternity goods – reducing the financial burden of shopping new



## Our events

We hold support groups, activities, and classes, developed in line with community needs



## Our ethos

We offer a local alternative to buying new



## Our carousel programme

We work with 150+ agencies to supply free goods to families in need



## Our volunteers

We provide volunteering opportunities across our shop, sorting hub, events, and delivery teams

# 2021-2022 Highlights

**10864**

Customers welcomed through our door

**347**

Classes & workshops took place in our event space

**49684**

Items rehomed through our shop

**27**

New agencies partnered with our Carousel Programme

**796**

Essential packs were distributed to families through our Carousel Programme

**1434**

Hours contributed by volunteers



**100% of partners said they would recommend Merry-go-round**



**100% of partners said they were mostly or very satisfied with the contents of our free packs**

# Community Feedback & Highlights

“ Great shop, good quality pieces at good value and excellent customer service. Highly recommend.  
- Shop Customer”

“ We popped in today for their maternity event. We were made very welcome and picked up a couple of maternity tops. Will definitely be back once I get further along.  
- Event attendee ”

“ Great place to hang out, get advice and pick up good quality kids stuff for bargain prices. Perfect if you are keen to minimise your baby's environmental impact.”  
- Shop Customer

“ Thank you very much for the clothes that arrived. They are very beautiful and fit the baby's size and my baby is happy with it.  
- Carousel Service User ”

“ I had stopped working after having a baby and was looking for a positive way to spend my child-free days after my daughter started nursery. Merry-go-round is a great cause, environmentally and socially as well as fitting around family life! I have met lots of great people who have made me feel part of the team and I know I'm helping a good cause.”  
- Volunteer

# One Stop Baby Shop

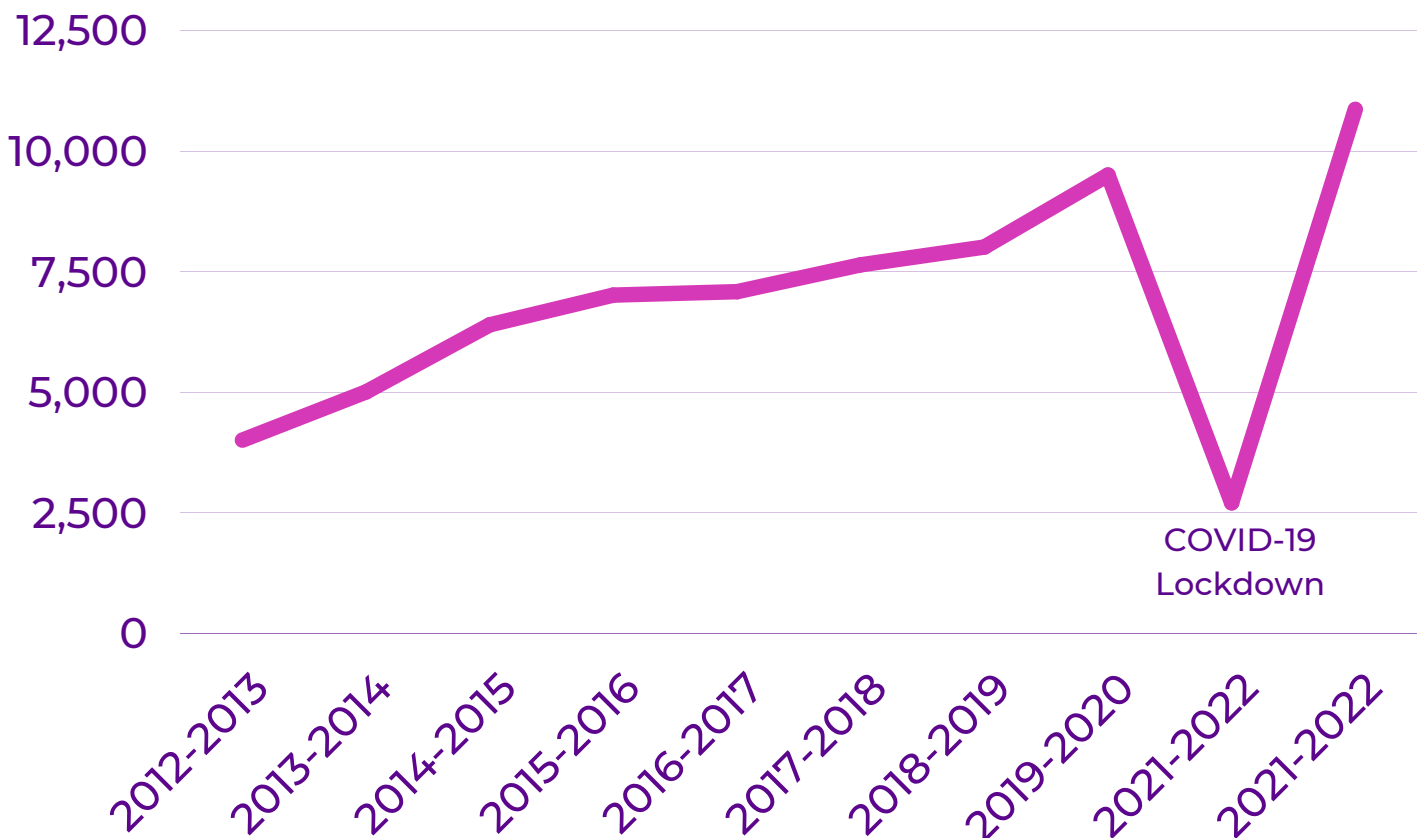
We aim to be parents' first choice when shopping for their little one, ensuring we have everything they need in the one place to a high standard and at a low price.

"When we first opened, we sold new crafts for gifts, now families proudly buy secondhand and are excited to tell people where they got it from." - Samantha Moir



Our customer audience is growing year on year and more people than ever are choosing to shop secondhand over new.

## Customer Growth





# Bringing People Together

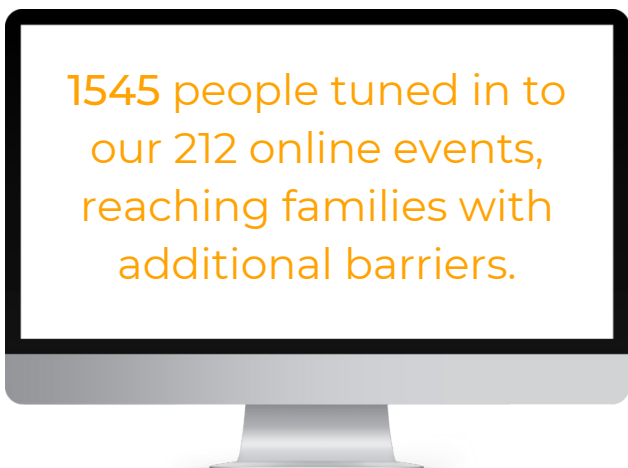
Merry-go-round had always set out to be more than just a shop. It has quickly become a community asset and social space, hosting an array of classes, workshops and peer-to-peer support sessions for families.

Ten years on, we continue to welcome and support families, aiming to create a social space that is led by the community.

80 people come every week to meet others and feel more supported in their parenting journey.



In 2020, when lockdown hit, many families and expectant mothers were unable to attend antenatal classes and many support groups stopped. In order to tackle the rise in isolation, we put our events online. We also launched our own antenatal classes to ensure parents felt supported during challenging times.





# Growing up Green

We are committed to making it easy and accessible for our local community to reduce its carbon footprint. Our high quality, Revolve-certified store fills our customers with confidence and provides plenty of choice.

By encouraging our community to donate and buy second hand, these items get a second lease of life.

We share an array of useful resources on our social media and offer cloth nappy workshops to families who want to transition to reusable nappies.



We are so proud of our community. Year on year the number of items rehomed increases and our community's environmental impact reduces.

**14**  
**tonnes in**  
**total rehomed**

**5 tonnes**  
**clothing**

**4.5 tonnes**  
**toys & baby**  
**equipment**

**2.3 tonnes**  
**books**

**2.2 tonnes**  
**furniture &**  
**prams**

# From one family to another

Due to the generosity of our community we've been able to expand our pack request service. Formally known as the Partnership Programme, rebranded as the Carousel Programme last year.

37% of children living in Glasgow are in relative poverty, and due to the cost of living crisis we have seen a surge in requests. Thanks to the commitment of our partners and health visitors, we have been able to fulfil these 796 requests.



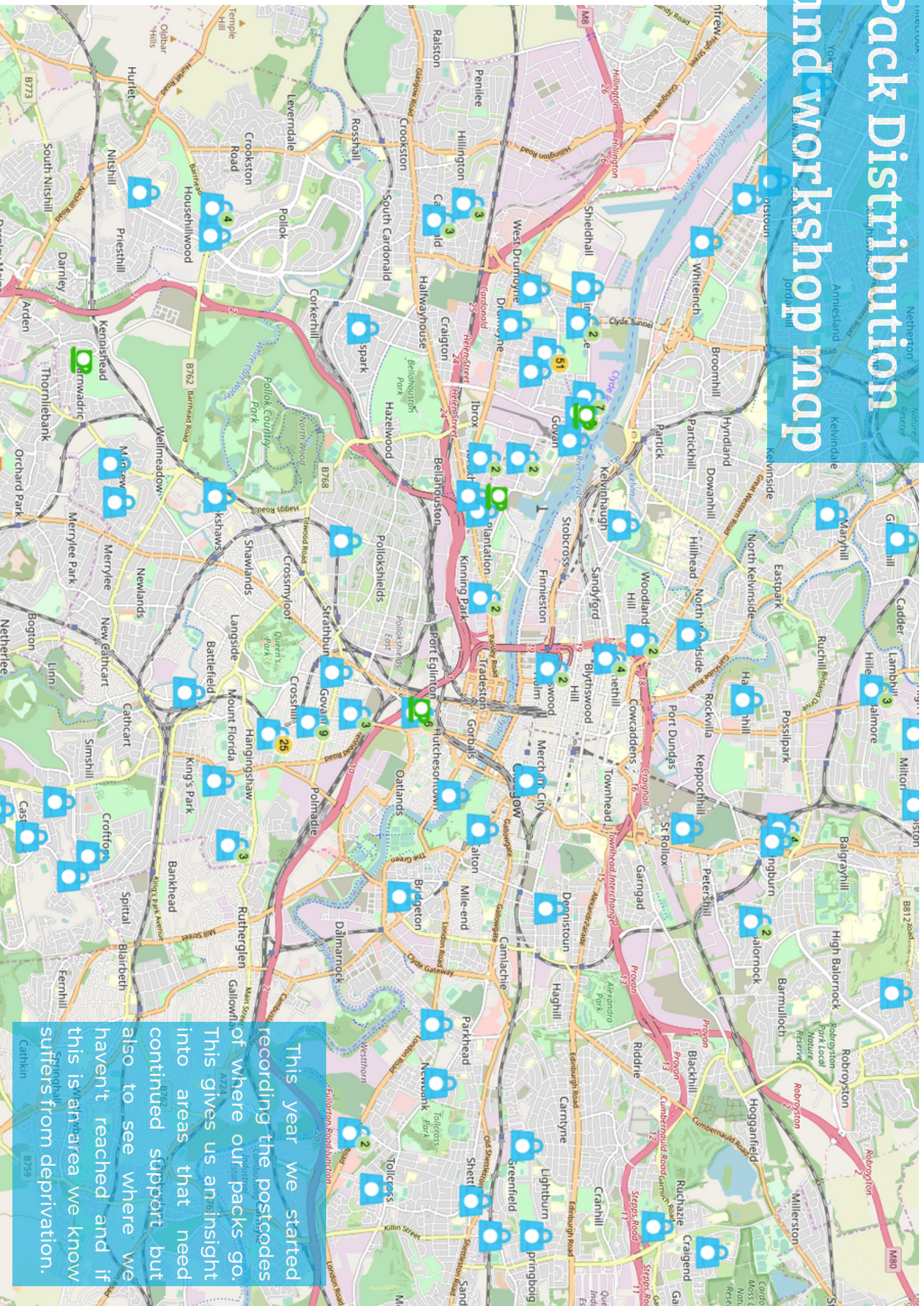
31% of packs distributed were newborn 0-3m bundles and maternity packs .



Between 2021-2022 there were an average of 72 packs going out a month.

Our packs include: starter packs full of baby and toddler essentials; nappy packs with towels and toiletries; literacy and sensory packs with books and toys. Our maternity packs include clothing, creams and essentials for birth and aftercare.


# Pack Distribution and workshop map



This year we started recording the postcodes of where our packs go. This gives us an insight into areas that need continued support but also to see where we haven't reached and if this is an area we know suffers from deprivation.


Cathryn Springhall

# Carousel Programme Feedback




"I have this gentleman who is In low income and his partner was having a baby. He felt he was not doing enough contributing, but when I mentioned Merry-go-round he was happy and felt so good that he could take all these items and be able to provide for his child . It was really satisfying." - Agency

"When I came back from Romania we had to spend all our money on getting a new flat for our family. I had no money for clothes for my child, even though the ones they had no longer fit him. And I desperately needed a new pram as mine was a very old, broken one. With the help of Merry-go-round, my boy got some lovely clothes and now I have a pram I can properly use. Maybe for others it's a small thing, but I could never get this for myself so I am so thankful and relieved." - Service User



"A lot of our families are asylum seekers or have limited funds. Our other families are in in-work poverty and also have very little funds. The cost of living crisis has really affected a lot of our families that were just coping/managing but have now felt the impact where they have told us that they have gone without food to ensure their children eat and are warm. The packs make a huge difference to families and gives them something less to worry about during this current crisis. Thank you for all your support!" - Agency

"For months since my pram was stolen from my close I couldn't leave the house with my son. He was getting really restless in the house and for me it was impossible to do my errands and shopping as I couldn't afford a new pram. This pram has been a life saver. I can leave the house, do my shopping and we are both getting some fresh air. I am so grateful."- Service user





# Volunteers

We are grateful for our dedicated team of volunteers. We try our utmost to ensure they have a rewarding experience and gain what they are looking for, whether it be new skills, friends or improved confidence.

We have provided a range of training opportunities which include first aid and PAT testing which supports people into paid work.

Our volunteers increase their awareness of their environmental impact, whilst giving back to the community.

In 2021-2022, we welcomed 138 volunteers to join our team, who dedicated 1434 hours in the year.





This year we celebrate 10 years of Merry-go-round.  
Here is how much we have achieved.



76 tonnes  
rehomed



68408  
customers



7 years  
Revolve Certified



2463 in store  
events



17617 event  
attendees



525 online  
events



162 partners



3838 packs



3520 volunteer  
hours

# Partnership Success Stories

Last year, the Pram Project secured funding to allow them to donate a percentage of their refurbished prams to families who need them. Thanks to Joe and his team, we have been able to offer many families we support a pram. This has saved them a lot of stress but also given them independence to leave the house more easily with their child.



We've been lucky enough to partner with Jo from Bosom Buddies, who has kindly donated 30 feeding bras to date. This is a great addition for our maternity packs as it makes life that little bit easier for those who choose to breastfeed.



We teamed up with Apparel Xchange and R:evolve Recycle to do a joint campaign called Reworking Together to raise awareness online. We were apart of Apparel Xchange's Fair Fashion event during COP26. We continue to work in partnership by exchanging our older children's clothes with Apparel Xchange and have upcoming projects planned with R:evolve.



# Looking to the Future

We are so proud of everything we have achieved over the last decade, but we are not stopping here... We are excited to share with you an insight of our upcoming projects and long term goals.



## Mega Sales are back

Due to popular demand we are relaunching our Mega sales in September. These will make an annual occurrence as they allow us to reach many more people, spread the word of shopping second hand to a wider audience and encourage lots more people to reduce their environmental impact.

## Tailored Events to Community needs

We will continue to adapt our events programme in line with our communities needs of prenatal and postnatal support. This year, we've already introduced a free "stay and play" session because we know free child friendly hangouts are essential during the holidays. We plan to host environmental parenting workshops and provide our community with positive and inspirational environmental resources, to increase awareness and sense of responsibility towards the planet.



# Carousel Programme - Community Outreach Projects

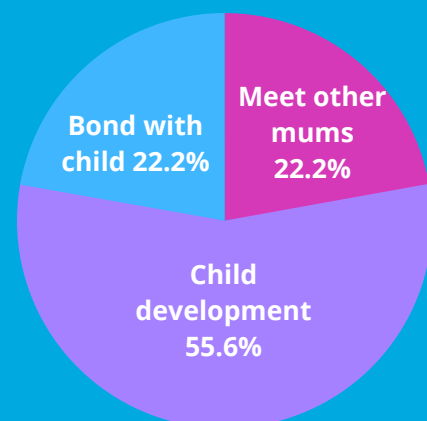
In April, we launched Merry-go-play. Thank you to Jamie-Lee from Mears who introduced us to the women who they had homed. Merry-go-play is an inclusive, interactive, sensory and storytelling workshop. The group aims to provide a safe space for mothers to come together, make friends and encourage language development. Many of the attendees are refugees and people seeking asylum. We feel it's important to try our utmost to help improve the lives of these women and introduce them to the Merry-go-round community. We hope to continue to raise awareness of this group, welcome mothers who may benefit from its support and continue to build the confidence and autonomy of the mothers and carers that currently attend. The results below came from a survey after eight weeks of trailing the workshop.



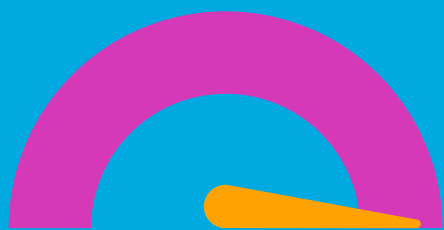
15 Merry-go-play workshops plus four outreach workshops

111

Attendees over 15 sessions of Merry-go-play



Initial reasons for attending



100% of respondents said they very satisfied with the group



100% of respondents felt the sessions had increased bonding with child



100% of respondents said the sessions had reduced feelings of isolation



# An inclusive approach to volunteering

We are dedicated to having an inclusive volunteer programme that will benefit people from all walks of life. We want to continue to ensure we can cater to the needs of our volunteers.

We want to remove barriers that may stop people from volunteering such as access and language. A priority when finding our long term sorting hub is to ensure it has disability access and facilities available as we want everyone to have the opportunity to volunteer if they so wish.

We will continue to offer a flexible approach in line with the needs of volunteers, offer peer support to those who wish to bring a friend and oversee a carer-friendly environment for all those who require assistance.

Thank you to everyone who has been on this journey with us the last 10 years. We really couldn't have done it without you. Pictured above is Alan, our volunteer delivery driver - a true legend!

# THANK YOU!

