

Spotlight on Sands

2017, Issue 1




Explore our new website

**Every death matters - keep up to date
on research progress**

Join #TeamSands today

Social

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Useful contacts

Helpline

t: 0808 164 3332

e: helpline@sands.org.uk

Fundraising and Events enquiries

t: 020 3897 6092

e: fundraising@sands.org.uk

General enquiries

t: 020 7436 7940

Make a donation

t: 020 3897 6092

e: supportercare@sands.org.uk

e-Newsletter

Get regular information about our work and recent news via our e-Newsletter, sign up here: www.sands.org.uk/sands-enewsletter

Your feedback is valuable to us

We'd love to hear your comments.
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SpotlightonSands

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“What you told me was inspiring, generous and rightly ambitious.”

Dear Friends

Welcome to this new *Spotlight on Sands* magazine. We want to be able to share with everyone not only all the different things we are doing, but also personal experiences, and ways to become more involved if you would like to – and *Spotlight* seemed to be a good way to do all these things. A magazine that lies on the kitchen table can be picked up and read while you wait for the kettle to boil; can be shared with friends; can be given to bereaved parents – we wanted to produce a magazine that works for everyone and would love to hear what you think about it. (See page 2).

Sands’ wants to make a real difference for anyone affected by the death of a baby. Parents, members and volunteers have told us what is needed, and their ideas are inspiring, generous and rightly ambitious. We need to make sure that we reduce the number of babies dying every day before, during and shortly after birth; we need to make sure that everyone affected by the death of a baby receives the best possible bereavement care wherever they live and whichever hospital or maternity unit they are in; and we need to make sure that the amazing support that we, as Sands, offer reaches everyone who needs it.

Now is the right time to be clearly identifying the differences that we

want to see and that we want to make – clinicians, researchers, governments and policy makers all have a real focus on the issues around stillbirth and neonatal death at the moment and we must take advantage of this opportunity.

Charities play a key role when different sectors all recognise the importance of a problem and are committed to working on it together, and so I believe that Sands has a very important role to play. Most importantly we can represent the voice of bereaved parents – a powerful voice that needs to be heard and used to find the way forward, to leverage the change that is needed. But we are also in a position to see and be involved in the many strands of activity – and seeing the bigger picture allows us to help put the different pieces of the jigsaw together.

I would like to say a big thank you for your ongoing commitment and support to the work of Sands.

It is an enormous privilege to be a part of Sands and to feel the real commitment and energy from everyone to continue to make a real difference for parents both now and in the future.

Many thanks.

Dr Clea Harmer
Chief Executive, Sands

Chair’s Introduction

As I am sure many of you know, we are embarking on our next three year strategic plan spanning from 2017 to 2020, which makes it an exciting time to have been appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees.

A comprehensive review of our work has been undertaken, involving the whole organisation: volunteers, members, parents, staff and trustees. Together we have explored every aspect of our work ranging from healthcare

professional training, to how the helpline operates, to our financial model, and to how we communicate with fundraisers. This process has harnessed the accumulated wisdom, emotional intelligence and creativity of the whole organisation, and has helped us identify how we move forward in 2017 to make a real difference to bereaved parents and reduce the number of babies dying in the UK. During this self-evaluation Sands has

been reminded that we are uniquely placed – our ability to offer the right support for parents and families, to improve bereavement care, and to reduce the number of babies dying is dependent on our 100 local groups and our staff working together as one organisation.

I am looking forward to the year ahead and the opportunities it will bring to all of us in Sands.

Reg Bailey, CBE
Chair of Trustees, Sands



NEWS FROM SANDS

Bookings open for joint Sands, Bliss and Royal College of Midwives conference

The ninth joint annual conference entitled 'Transforming Loss: Meeting the needs of parents' will be held on 12 September 2017. Following the first eight years of successful conferences held in London, 2017 will see the event hosted in Birmingham, with the hope of making it more accessible to practitioners across the UK. Let your local hospital unit know about this conference and get them to register. www.sands.org.uk/professionals



Audit of Bereavement Care Provision in UK Maternity Units 2016

The recently published full audit provides an in-depth examination of bereavement care provision in maternity units across the UK in 2016. It found that whilst there have been improvements in bereavement care in recent years, there are still aspects of care that require further attention and resourcing to ensure that all parents receive the level of care they need. For further information on all recent news from the Improving Bereavement Care team see page 8.

New Training Day for Health Visitors

We are pleased to announce a new evidence based and skills focused workshop has been developed for health visitors. It aims to enable health visitors to develop the knowledge, insight and skills to provide high quality, sensitive care to parents who experience the death of a baby. Find out more via www.sands.org.uk/professionals

Sands responds to new MBRRACE-UK confidential enquiry into maternal deaths

According to the report, 564 women died over a three year period between 2012 and 2014, either during or within a year of the end of their pregnancy. The report sets out key recommendations to improve care. Dr Clea Harmer, Chief Executive, said: "The vital messages in this report, if taken up by health services, have the potential to have a profound impact on the lives of families across the UK." Read more about the work being done by our Research and Prevention team on page 11.

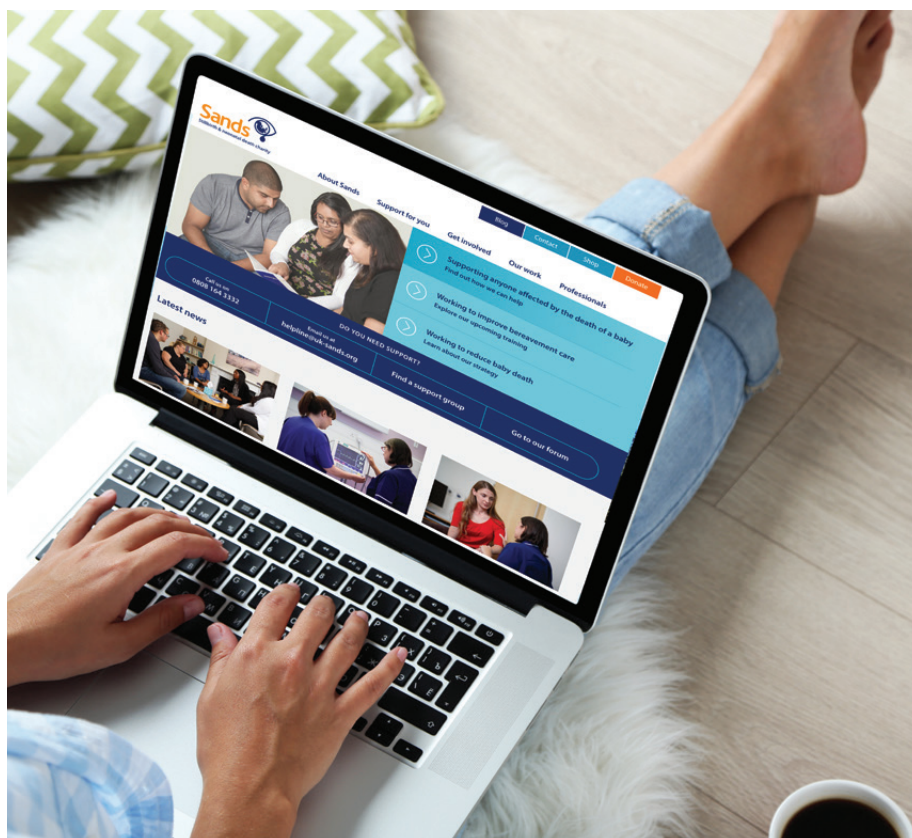
Sands part of collaboration to develop Perinatal Mortality Review Tool

Sands is thrilled that after five years of championing the need to establish good quality in-hospital reviews of care when a baby dies, the government has commissioned a collaboration led by MBRRACE-UK to develop a national Perinatal Mortality Review Tool.

This will be a free, online tool which hospital staff can use to help them understand why a baby has died and whether there are any lessons to learn from the death to save future lives.

Keep up to date with all our latest news via www.sands.org.uk/about-sands/media-centre/news

New and improved website



We relaunched our website early in 2017 to ensure we present Sands as the UK's leading stillbirth and neonatal death charity.

What's new?

Our work

We now have a section of our website dedicated to our work as a whole. As well as information on our bereavement support services and our initiatives to improve care for parents, you'll also find detailed information about why babies die before, during and shortly after birth, and what we're doing to ensure that fewer babies die in the future.

Simple, easy to use navigation

We've restructured our website to make it easier to get around. All information has been carried across, but we've organised it into a few simple, common sense sections. Also, if you're using a desktop computer you can hover over the menu to view all the pages in that section of the website.

Optimised for mobile

The likelihood is you're one of the 70 per cent who use a mobile to visit the Sands website. Our new site has been developed with mobiles in mind, so if you're using your phone you'll find the site is great to use.

New address

Our new website is www.sands.org.uk which better reflects our name and brand.

Blog

We've also launched a new blog as part of the website. We'll be using this to present new views and comments on important issues, as well as highlight the fantastic work of our supporters and fundraisers, so do check regularly for new articles at www.sands.org.uk/blog

Sands advises soap scriptwriters to ensure accuracy

After experiencing the death of her baby son Archie in real life a few years ago, actress Kym Marsh made a brave decision to act out heartbreaking scenes on screen when her character Michelle in TV soap opera Coronation Street experienced a late miscarriage after 23 weeks.

Kym felt, that as it was a subject so close to her heart, she wanted to help raise awareness of the issues surrounding late miscarriage, and there was no bigger audience than ITV's flagship soap which is watched by millions of people in the UK every week.

Coronation Street viewers witnessed Michelle and Steve struggle to come to terms with the loss of their beloved baby boy Ruairi when she went into early labour, and the story showed how the death of a baby affects both the mother, father and grandparents.

It emerged that Coronation Street bosses were aware of advice provided by Sands Bereavement Support & Awareness Specialist, Erica Stewart, to writers at BBC's EastEnders on a stillbirth storyline last year, and picked up the phone to ask her if she could help advise them with their scripts.

Erica explains: "I received a call out of the blue a few months ago from a Coronation Street researcher who said they were writing scripts on a story where a major character has a late miscarriage, and could I help them to ensure that the story is portrayed accurately, truthfully and sensitively. As a bereaved parent myself, who has supported many other parents over the years, I was in a position to be able to share my own experiences and ensure the writers were on the right path."



As a result of the national interest in the storyline our Helpline opened after each episode was broadcast, to provide help and support to bereaved parents and their families who were affected.

After the episode where the couple were told their baby had died, our Helpline received over 100 extra emails during a three day period and the equivalent of nearly two weeks' worth of phone calls in just two days. Our press team also worked closely with their counterparts at ITV which saw the charity mentioned over 300 times in the media.

Coverage included; BBC's Victoria Derbyshire Show, ITV's lunchtime news, OK magazine, BBC news online, The Daily Telegraph, The Sun, front-page of the Daily Mirror and a double-page spread and front-page in the Daily Star.

Sands Helpline: 0808 164 3332
Email: helpline@sands.org.uk

"Many people shy away from the issue and others have a misconception that this is a thing of the past."

Malicious tweets led to a greater awareness of stillbirth



Photo: Peter Else

A stark reminder about thinking before you post messages on social media made the national news in January, when footballer Alfie Barker of Hitchin Town Football Club, sent malicious tweets to Bournemouth FC player Harry Arter, about his daughter who was stillborn in 2015.

The resulting media and public furore about his thoughtless comments had the positive outcome of raising much needed awareness of the shocking fact that 15 babies a day still die in the UK.

Hitchin Town FC called Sands because they wanted to help raise awareness of stillbirth both in the media and by holding a bucket collection at their Top Field Stadium.

Chris Taylor, our Head of Fundraising and Communications, was delighted to receive a cheque for £1,000 on the pitch from Hitchin Town FC Chairman, Terry Barratt. The Club went on to hold a special match in aid of Sands which raised a further £1,000.

Dr Clea Harmer, our Chief Executive, said: "We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone at Hitchin Town Football Club for allowing us to collect donations. The funds raised will allow us to support parents whose babies have been stillborn or have died neonatally. As a charity we rely on the wonderful generosity of our supporters to continue our work."

"For a TV drama like Coronation Street to cover this devastating experience is a brilliant way of raising awareness of the issues surrounding a baby's death at any gestation."



IMPROVING BEREAVEMENT CARE

What does bereavement care look like nationally? – auditing bereavement care

The work of the Improving Bereavement Care team at Sands is focused on supporting professionals to deliver the best possible care under difficult circumstances. The delivery of this care is dependent on both the availability of resources and effective systems of care being in place.

It is important to know what the provision of care looks like at a national level to identify priorities for policy making and the allocation of resources. This data has not been collected at a national level though, creating a gap in understanding which can hinder wider attempts to improve care.

This is why Sands has committed to a UK-wide rolling programme to audit the provision of bereavement care to families who experience the death of a baby. Looking at maternity, neonatal and gynaecology units in turn, we will find out about topics such as:

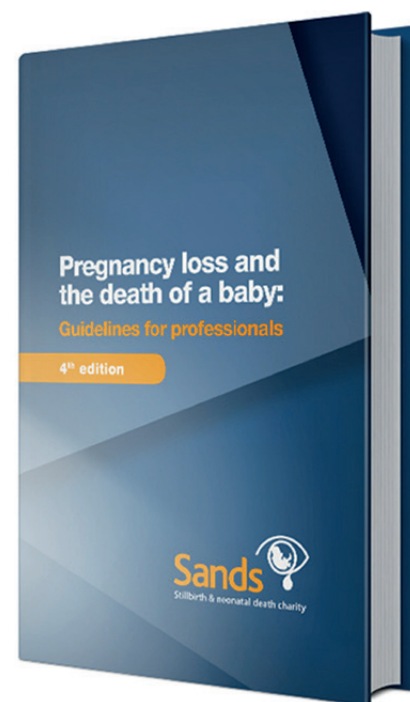
- the training of staff in bereavement care
- the facilities parents are cared for in
- how staff communicate with parents

Audits of each type of unit will be completed on a rolling basis every three years, to identify themes and highlight what is working well, or what requires attention for improvement.

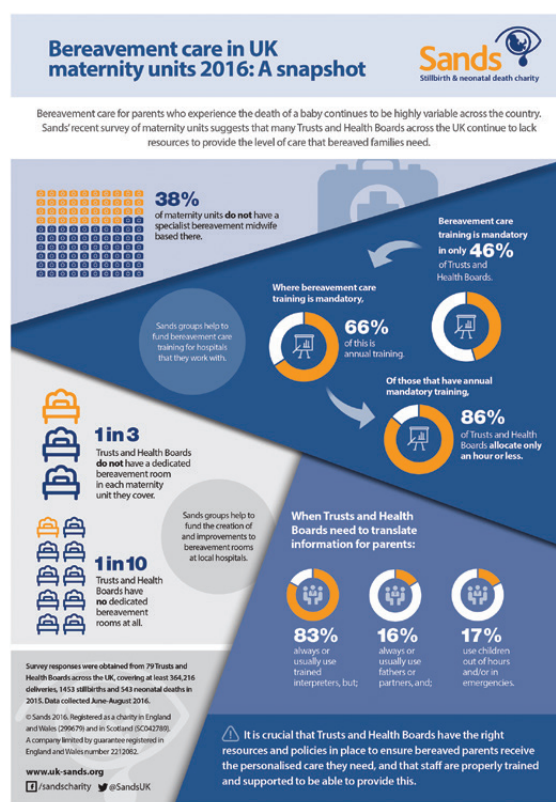
www.sandsguidelines.co.uk

The first of this new programme of audits was completed for care in maternity units, and is available from the Sands website here: www.sands.org.uk/professionals/professional-resources/audit-bereavement-care-provision-uk-maternity-units-2016. It found that whilst there have been improvements in bereavement care in recent years, there are still aspects of care that require further attention and resourcing to ensure that all parents receive the level of care they need.

We are delighted to be able to contribute to a greater understanding of what bereavement care looks like across the UK, and look forward to identifying how this is changing over the coming years.



Did you know that since the launch in September 2016, over 625 copies of the new Sands Guidelines for Professionals have been purchased.



First Sands Award for bereavement care at RCM

2017 saw the first Sands Award for bereavement care included in the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Annual Midwifery Awards.

This award recognises excellence in bereavement care provision by maternity staff for women and their families when a baby dies.

In allocating this award the judges were looking for an individual or team who demonstrates a strong commitment to delivering excellent bereavement care; has a commitment to educate and support colleagues to ensure good practice is disseminated; acknowledges the support needs of maternity staff working in bereavement care; shows evidence of an initiative or service development which has worked in practice to improve bereavement care and who works in partnership with Maternity Services Liaison Committee (MSLC) and parent groups to inform and influence service change.

Clare Beesley, a bereavement midwife and part of the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust Bereavement Team in Solihull, was presented with the prestigious award at the RCM ceremony which took place on Tuesday 7 March at The Brewery, London.



Clare Beesley said: "We were overwhelmed to receive the Bereavement Care Award and to be recognised by Sands and the RCM for our passion and commitment to care for bereaved families and their precious babies. It is something that the whole team are so proud of and will inspire us to continue our work in providing best possible practice for families at such a devastating time in their lives".

Cheryl Titherly, Improving Bereavement Care Manager at Sands, said: "I would like to congratulate Clare and her team on winning their well-deserved Sands Award. The team have demonstrated they go beyond what would ordinarily be expected of them to provide the best possible standard of bereavement care".

"Clare has also developed a number of key initiatives to support her team in providing bereavement care, including online training that will help her and her colleagues to continue to provide the best possible support to bereaved parents."

Ending the postcode lottery

Thousands of parents each year will experience the devastation of their baby dying before, during or shortly after birth or suddenly and unexpectedly within the first year of life.

The quality of care that bereaved families receive when their baby dies can have long-lasting effects. Good care cannot remove parents' pain and grief, but it can help parents through this devastating time. Poor care can and does make things much worse.

The bereavement care received by parents varies hugely regionally, within Trusts/Health Boards

and even within the same unit, depending on staffing.

All bereaved parents should be offered the same high standard of parent-centred, empathic and safe care when a baby dies.

Sands is leading on a project to develop and implement a National Bereavement Care Pathway. We are working alongside:

- ARC (Antenatal Results & Choices)
- Bliss
- Lullaby Trust
- Miscarriage Association
- Neonatal Nurses Association
- Royal College of Midwives
- Royal College of Nurses
- Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists

And with the support of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss and also the Department of Health. The National Bereavement Care Pathway will be parent-centred, coordinated, be flexible to the individual needs and preferences of parents and promote a holistic approach to each parents' health, care and support needs.

We will engage with professionals, parents, decision makers and influencers and will build on existing guidance, research and pathways.

Scotland's universities embrace Sands bereavement care training

This academic year Sands will deliver bereavement care training to all of the first and third year midwifery students. They will be training across Scotland at the three universities offering the undergraduate midwifery degree: Napier University in Edinburgh, Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen and the University of the West of Scotland.

Last year Sands reached all first year students training across Scotland. This means that every student currently training to become a midwife in Scotland will have received Sands bereavement care training by the end of this year.

Sands will have trained around 650 student midwives as part of this programme of training for student midwives in Scotland over the last two years, resulting in:

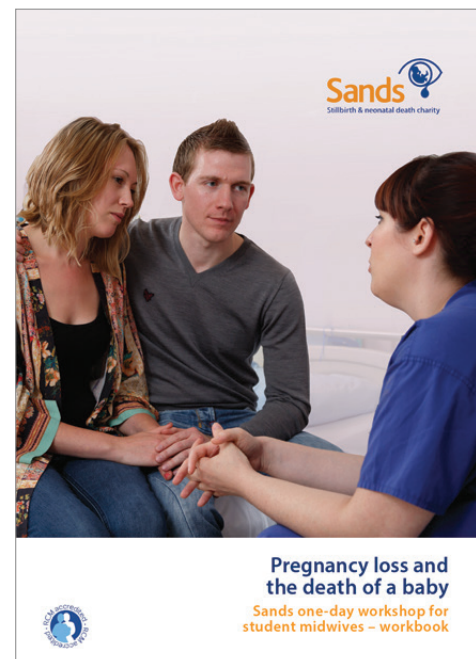
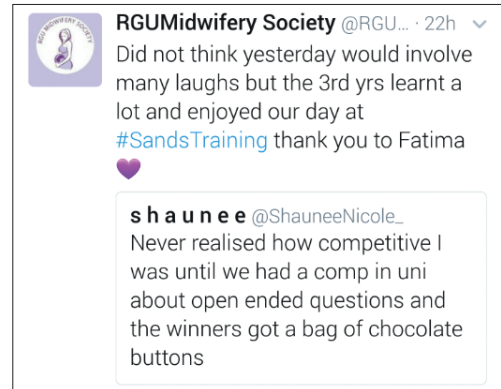
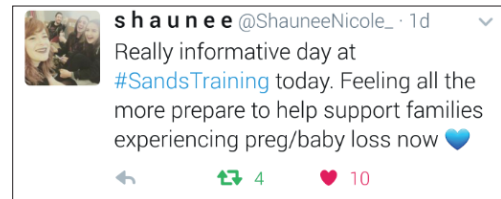
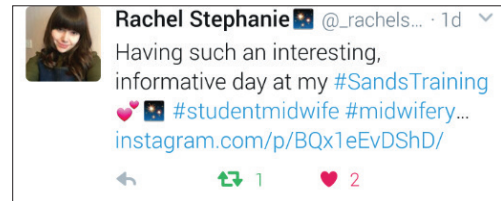
- Midwives who are better equipped and feel more confident in providing care for bereaved parents and identifying their own support needs.
- Improved quality of care for bereaved parents.
- Increased awareness of Sands' work among midwives in Scotland.

Positive feedback from Scottish students

"This course is very effective to ensure women and families receive sensitive and compassionate care. This course also discusses the importance of acknowledging previous losses which I was unaware of."

"I found this workshop very useful and I would recommend it to others."

"This training has been really useful for going back onto placement."



RESEARCH AND PREVENTION



Too many deaths

The chances of a baby dying in the UK are higher than they are in many parts of Europe. Currently, around one in 230 babies is stillborn every year in the UK, while one in 370 babies dies shortly after birth.

Sands' Research and Prevention team work across the UK to highlight these tragedies and help experts find out why babies die and how to prevent those deaths.

Highlighting the need for change

We work with researchers, clinicians, the NHS and governments to put the parent voice at the heart of work to find answers and to improve the safety of care for pregnant women and their babies.

In recent years, we have highlighted the tragedy of stillbirth and neonatal death to the UK Parliament and to the devolved Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly, prompting action from all.

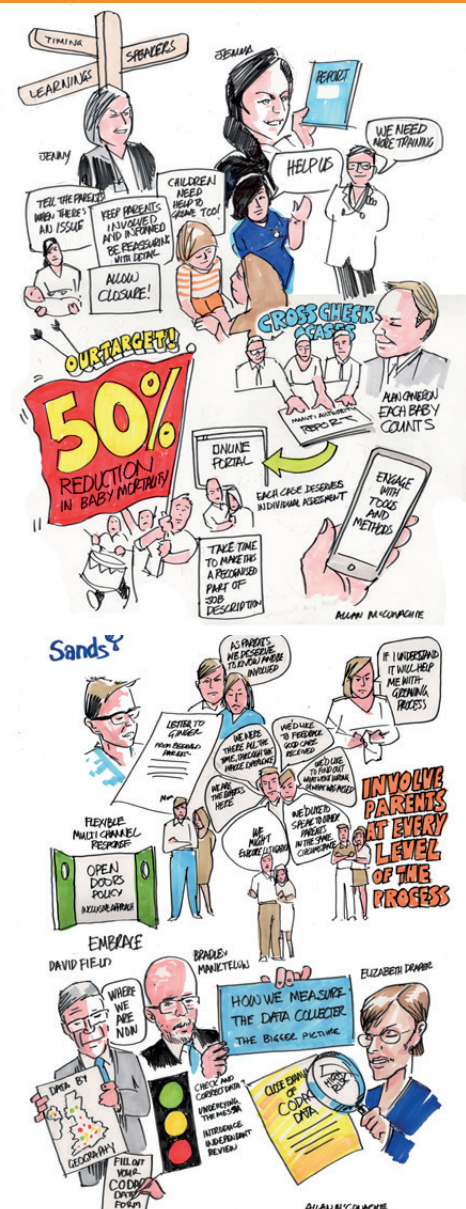
In 2015, Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, announced an ambition to reduce stillbirths and neonatal deaths in England by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030. Scotland is aiming to reduce its stillbirth rate by 35% by 2019.

The Maternity Transformation Programme is rolling out across the England, with the aim of improving choice and safety for women and families. Janet Scott, Sands' Research and Prevention Lead, will be advising on Sands' input

into the Programme's Stakeholder Council, as well as on government consultations on key aspects of the work, ensuring safety remains a focus area, and that the views and experiences of bereaved parents are not overlooked. Janet is also Sands' representative on Scotland's Stillbirth Working Group.

Charlotte Bevan, the team's Senior Research and Prevention Advisor, sits on the Welsh National Stillbirth Group, which launches its 'Safer Pregnancy Wales' public health campaign in 2017. The campaign was inspired by work we did with the Department of Health to agree advice that would help women reduce their risk of stillbirth. Sands has used the advice to develop its own Safer Pregnancy website. www.saferpregnancy.org.uk

Illustrations by Allan McConachie



Every death matters



Charlotte Bevan is Sands' representative on the MBRRACE-UK collaboration (Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audit and Confidential Enquiries across the UK), which collects national data on numbers of babies who die in the UK every year and reports back to Trusts/Health Boards on their rates and how they compare to similar organisations across the UK.

MBRRACE-UK also carry out 'confidential enquiries' into baby deaths to understand whether poor care plays a role in some deaths. Their last enquiry into deaths that happened around a baby's due date but before the mother had gone into labour found that six out of ten deaths might have been prevented with improvements to care. In 2017, MBRRACE-UK are looking at the care of babies who died during or shortly after labour as a result of something that happened in delivery (and after 37 or more weeks of pregnancy).

We're also on the independent advisory group for Each Baby Counts, a project being run by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to learn lessons and help reduce the number of babies dying or brain injured because of an event during labour.



Finding answers

Up to 2016, Sands has given £500,000 of funding to support high-quality research into stillbirth and neonatal death prevention and bereavement care.

We have now established the Sands Research Fund, with an annual research funding programme designed to award funding to studies most likely to make a difference. Our Senior Research Officer, Dr Laura Price, oversees the funding programme.

Dr Dimitrios Siassakos, Claire Storey, Co-Chair of the International Stillbirth Alliance, and Charlotte Bevan

Speaking up

Wherever we work and whatever we do, our goal in the Research and Prevention team is to ensure that fewer families suffer the devastation of their baby's death, by contributing to improvements in safety and care wherever we have a voice.



Different ways to donate to Sands

Set up a Regular Donation to Sands

Setting up a regular donation is the most efficient way to donate; allowing us to plan ahead for essential projects and enabling us to provide a secure foundation in providing the services we offer.

To set up a direct debit please download a Direct Debit Mandate form from our website or use the version in the centre pages of this magazine, complete and return to the address on the form, clearly stating the amount and how frequently you would like to donate.

We will send you regular updates to show you how your donations are being used in our e-newsletters, Impact Report and supporters' magazines. To find out more about who we are and what we do visit:

www.sands.org.uk/about-sands/who-we-are/what-we-do-and-how-we-do-it

Single Donations

If you would like to make a single donation to Sands or if you have collected donations from others in memory of a loved one, then we are able to accept these by either cheque or via credit card.

Please call our Supporter Care team or email **supportercare@sands.org.uk** to discuss the best option for you.

Leave a Gift in Your Will

By leaving a gift to Sands in your Will you'll be helping us to continue our valuable work supporting those affected by stillbirth and neonatal death, funding research to reduce the number of babies dying, and raising awareness to promote safer pregnancy and better bereavement care.

Your gift would help us make a real difference, so once you have made provision for your family and friends we would be very grateful for your consideration of Sands in your Will.

There are different ways you can gift money to us:

After you have provided for your loved ones, you can leave a share of what remains to charity. This is known as a 'residuary gift'. A residuary legacy has the added benefit of keeping pace with inflation.

A cash gift. This is when you leave an exact sum of money to us. It's known as a 'pecuniary gift'.



A specific gift. This could be anything of value ranging from jewellery to shares.

We recommend using a solicitor to draw up your Will.

If you want to speak to someone please call **020 3897 6092** or email **legacies@sands.org.uk**

Any donation to Sands is hugely valuable to us. You would be helping to continue our vital work supporting those affected by stillbirth and neonatal death, funding research to reduce the number of babies dying, and raising awareness to promote safer pregnancy and better bereavement care.

FUNDRAISING

Focus on the Fun in Fundraising

The death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth is a devastating experience with lifelong consequences for the whole family. We work to support bereaved families and improve the care they receive as well as fund vital research to prevent more families suffering the loss of their precious baby.



To do this, we rely on your generosity and your help is greatly appreciated. Over the next few pages we will outline just a few of the different ways you can raise funds and support Sands. Much, much more is available on our website www.sands.org.uk/get-involved

There are hundreds of enjoyable ways you can choose to raise money, from fun runs to marathons, from sponsored baking to attempts at record breaking. Our fundraising team is always available to provide help and advice on how to make the most of your efforts, and to support you.



You can organise your own event or take part in a pre-existing event. By fundraising for Sands, you will help us to provide essential support for parents after the death of a baby, and work to reduce the number of parents affected by stillbirth and neonatal death. Remember, whatever you choose, it's usually best to select something you like doing! That way not only will you be helping us but you will be enjoying yourself too.

Bake for Sands

If you fancy yourself as a bit of a Mary Berry, there are lots of ways you can turn your baking skills into fundraising skills. Baking is a great way of getting kids involved with fundraising too. Download our **Bake for Sands** pack from the website.

Run, Jump or Walk for Sands

If you feel like being a bit more energetic, there are lots of physical activities you can do to help raise money for us – you don't have to be an experienced athlete, there is something for everyone.



Visit our dedicated Events section on our website. Here you'll find loads of fundraising events to take part in from Tough Mudders, to 10ks, to treks and marathons. There's a nifty location search and a number of filters to find the right event just for you. If you can't see what you're looking for please do get in touch with our friendly Fundraising team at fundraising@sands.org.uk or call **020 3897 6092** and we'll see what we can do to help.

Charity of the Year



Our corporate partners play an important role in raising funds and awareness to enable us to deliver the wide range of services that we offer and a **Charity of the Year partnership with Sands** is a fantastic way to motivate your staff and engage your customers.

If your company has helped an employee back to work after the death of a baby or if you have recently returned to work and want to nominate Sands as your Charity of the Year then we would be delighted to hear from you.

In partnering with Sands you will be connecting with a cause important to your employees and helping to fund our vital work to reduce the number of babies dying and supporting more families affected by the death of a baby.

Whether you have one or one hundred offices, sites or stores, we will work with you to produce a bespoke calendar of events and hands on support including:

- Dedicated Account Manager
- Talks and presentations at your offices
- Press and PR support
- Fundraising resources and materials
- Places for challenge events
- Information on helping a bereaved parent return to work

Dana Cuffe, Chief Operating Officer at Aldermore Group PLC, said: "We've been greatly impressed by the work that Sands does to support families impacted by stillbirth or neonatal death so we're very pleased to name them Aldermore's Charity of the Year for 2017. The cause is especially important to a member of our Wilmslow team who witnessed the vital support that the charity provides to families affected by the death of a baby. Our employees are really excited about supporting Sands' activities through our fundraising initiatives this year."

Contact us for more information:

For more information on working with Sands as your Charity of the Year and for other ways in which your company can support Sands please contact our Corporate Partnerships team on **020 3897 3444** or email **corporate.partnerships@sands.org.uk**

We would like to thank all our current corporate partners who are supporting our work in 2017.

Sands' Raising Awareness Campaign

#15babiesaday

15 babies die each day in the UK before, during or soon after birth.

During Sands Awareness Month, we are launching a national awareness raising campaign to highlight this appalling statistic: we are hanging 'washing lines' around the UK, lined with baby grows as a representation of those 15 babies that die each day. The image of a washing line simply but powerfully communicates this appalling daily statistic in a meaningful but 'every day' way.

Not only do we want to highlight this statistic, we also want to promote what Sands is doing to reduce the number and supporting those families affected:

- the amazing support that our volunteers provide local bereaved parents
- our combined efforts - with our volunteers, and our healthcare partnerships - to improve bereavement care across the UK

- our commitment to reducing the number of babies dying through research and prevention campaigns

High profile 'washing line events' will take place near Parliament in the four UK nations; England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in order to catch the attention of politicians and policy makers. We are starting the campaign events in London on the 15 June 2017, with further events planned in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the same day. We are encouraging every local Sands Group to join with our national campaign by displaying a washing line, with 15 baby grows hanging from it, in a prominent place in their town centre between the 15 and 30 of June 2017.

If you are part of a Group, check to see if your Group is taking part – and if not, contact your Network Coordinator for more information.

Sands Membership Form



Please complete the following clearly, preferably in CAPITALS
and with a BLACK pen.

Please then scan and email to membership@sands.org.uk or post to:
Sands, Victoria Charity Centre, 11 Belgrave Road, London. SW1V 1RB

1. Tell us About You

Title	<input type="text"/>	First Name	<input type="text"/>			
Surname	<input type="text"/>		Date of birth	<input type="text"/>		
Address	<input type="text"/>					
Town/City	<input type="text"/>		County	<input type="text"/>		
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Country	<input type="text"/>		
Email Address*	<input type="text"/>					
Tel (Day)	<input type="text"/>		Tel (Eve)	<input type="text"/>		
Mobile	<input type="text"/>		Tel (Other)	<input type="text"/>		

How would you prefer to receive constitutional information such as voting forms? Email ☐ Post ☐
Please Tick

*Please make sure you tell us your current email address if you would like to receive membership information by email
Please note that the liability of Membership is limited. In the event that the Charity is wound up, Members' liability is limited to £1.00

Joint Member

Title	<input type="text"/>	First Name	<input type="text"/>			
Surname	<input type="text"/>		Date of birth	<input type="text"/>		
Email Address*	<input type="text"/>					

How would you prefer to receive constitutional information such as voting forms? Email ☐ Post ☐
Please Tick

*Please make sure you tell us your current email address if you would like to receive membership information by email
Please note that the liability of Membership is limited. In the event that the Charity is wound up, Members' liability is limited to £1.00

2. About the Membership type you are applying for:

a. Individual and Joint/Family

Please note an Individual membership provides one vote and a Joint/Family Membership two votes at the Annual General Meeting

Is your membership Please Tick New ☐ Renewal ☐

Please note for a new membership please add £4.95 to help with the cost of shipping your pack

Membership Type

Individual £16.00 per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint/Family £24.00 per year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual (Low Income) £8.00 per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint/Family (Low Income) £10.00 per year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual (Overseas) £24.00 per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint/Family (Overseas) £32.00 per year	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Sands Group Officer and Committee Members

Please note an Individual membership provides one vote and a Joint/Family Membership two votes at the Annual General Meeting

Is your membership Please Tick New ☐ Renewal ☐

Please note for a new membership please add £4.95 to help with the cost of shipping your pack

Sands Group Name

Membership Type

Individual – Chair £12.00 per year

☐

Individual – Treasurer £12.00 per year

☐

Individual – Secretary £12.00 per year

☐

Individual – Befriender £12.00 per year

☐

Gift Aid Declaration

For any donation, Sands can reclaim the tax at no cost to you! This means for each £1 donated, Sands can reclaim 25p from HM Revenue & Customs; you just need to tick the Gift Aid box below.

To allow us to claim Gift Aid on your membership fee, please read the fine print below, tick the Gift Aid box. Please note that a separate Gift Aid Declaration is needed for each individual member. Additional forms are available by calling **020 3897 6092** or emailing membership@sands.org.uk

giftaid it

Gift Aid Declaration

☐

By ticking the box I confirm that I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

3. Payment

Please find enclosed a cheque/postal order payable to 'Sands' £

I would like to pay my membership fee by an annual Direct Debit *Please complete and return a Direct Debit Form ☐

We will set up an annual Direct Debit payable on the first day of the month that your membership fee becomes due.

4. Donation

I would like to make a regular donation to Sands by Direct Debit *Please complete and return a Direct Debit Form

How often would you like to donate? Monthly ☐ Annually ☐

How much would you like to donate?

£20 ☐ £50 ☐ £10 ☐ £5 ☐ Other Amount £

Please also complete and return the following:

- Company Consent Form for each person named in Part 1.

Thank you very much for becoming a member of Sands and supporting the vital work that we do. We are delighted to welcome you to Sands and together, hope that we can make a real difference for the Sands community.

We would like to contact you with news and information about Sands and other ways to support us

If you are happy to receive these emails from Sands please tick this box ☐

Supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby, working to improve bereavement care and promoting research to reduce the loss of babies' lives

Donation Return Form



Stillbirth & neonatal death charity

Please complete this form and send it together with any cheque(s) or postal order(s) (crossed and made payable to Sands) to **Sands, Victoria Charity Centre, 11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB**

Please complete all sections applicable clearly in black ink and in CAPITAL letters

First Name

 Last Name

Home Address

Post Code

Tel (Day)

 Mobile

Email

Donation in memory of

Donation Amount £

 Serial Id

If you wish to make your donation to Sands using your debit/credit card please tick ☐ and a member of our Supporter Care Team will call you. Alternatively please make your donation via our website at www.sands.org.uk/donate

Make your donation go further and be worth even more! For any donation, Sands can reclaim the tax at no cost to you! This means for each £1 donated, Sands can reclaim 25p from HM Revenue & Customs; you just need to tick the Gift Aid box below. To allow us to claim GiftAid on your donation, please read the fine print below, tick the Gift Aid box and print your name and home address, including your postcode clearly above. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK Taxpayer. Please note that a separate Gift Aid Declaration is needed for each individual donor. If you require additional information or Gift Aid Declaration forms please contact the Fundraising Team on 020 3897 6092.

Gift Aid Declaration

☐ By ticking the box I confirm that I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity.
I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Keep in touch! Your support really matters, and we'd love to keep you posted with our news, activities and appeals. Your details will only be used by Sands – we will never give your information to other organisations to use for their own purposes. You are free to change your mind at any time. Please tell us if you would be happy for us to contact you: Yes / No

Every year, Sands helps thousands of families who have experienced the death of a baby, and funds and promotes vital research to save babies' lives. Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, has provided emotional support, comfort and practical help to anyone affected by the death of a baby during pregnancy or shortly after birth since 1978. We have led the way in changing understanding of the significance and impact of a baby's death, and work in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of bereavement care offered to families around the time of their baby's death. We believe the number of babies that are stillborn or die shortly after birth each year in the UK is unacceptably high, and we want to ensure that as few parents as possible have to experience this devastating loss. With your support and the money and awareness that our supporters can raise, Sands can continue supporting those affected by the death of a baby and promote research to reduce the loss of babies' lives. Your valued gift will go towards enabling Sands to continue to respond to that need and promote research and changes in antenatal practice that could reduce the loss of babies' lives. To find out more about Sands visit www.sands.org.uk or call 020 7436 7940.

Thank You For Your Support – You Have Made A Difference!

Office Use									
Sands Group		A/c		Date Banked		Gift Aid		GA Reclaim	QC

Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)
Registered as a Charity in England and Wales: 299679 and in Scotland (SC042789) | Company Limited by Guarantee 2212082

My Regular Gift to Sands

Please complete all sections applicable, clearly and preferably in **black** ink and CAPITAL letters. Once complete send it to:
Sands, Victoria Charity Centre, 11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB

I wish to make a monthly gift to Sands of: ☐ £10 ☐ £20 ☐ £50 Other £: _____

I would like payments to be taken from my account beginning: 1st _____ (month)

If the collection falls within the next 21 days from receipt of this form the first payment will be collected the following month.

First Name

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Last Name

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Home Address

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Post Code

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Tel (Day)

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Mobile

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Email

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This donation is made in memory of

Make your donation go further and be worth even more! For any donation, Sands can reclaim the tax at no cost to you! This means for each £1 donated, Sands can reclaim 25p from HM Revenue & Customs; you just need to tick the Gift Aid box below. To allow us to claim Gift Aid on your donation, please read the fine print below, tick the Gift Aid box and print your name and home address, including your postcode clearly above. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK Taxpayer

Gift Aid Declaration

☐

By ticking the box I confirm that I want to Gift Aid my regular donation of £_____ and any other donations I may make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity.

I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Originator's Identification Number

6	4	5	5	7	6
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Supporter Number

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Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

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Bank/Building Society Account Number

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Branch Sort Code

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Name and Full Address of your Bank/Building Society

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Postcode

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Instruction to Your Bank or Building Society – Please pay Sands Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Sands and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee



- ✓ This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits
- ✓ If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit PSL re Sands will notify you 5 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request PSL re Sands to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- ✓ If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by PSL re Sands or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society. If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when PSL re Sands asks you to.
- ✓ You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.



You can check our website for contact details of your local Network Coordinator.

But we need more than just our amazing volunteers to get behind this campaign – we need everybody to support Sands and raise awareness. You can get involved by:

- Sharing on social media our campaign posts and photographs, searching for the **#15babiesaday** hashtag.
- Checking our website for more information about the campaign as June approaches: www.sands.org.uk
- Thinking about small ways you could fundraise for Sands. As long as you focus on the number 15, the world is your oyster. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- A mini-fundraiser: bake 15 cupcakes for work and accept donations.

- A mini 'dance-athon': spend 15 minutes on with your family and friends dancing for Sands – a great way to get siblings or younger children involved.

- Put aside 50p per day for the month of June equalling £15. Order one of our new cardboard collection boxes.

While the number of deaths has fallen in recent years, this is no time to be complacent. According to the latest Lancet Stillbirth Series, we are moving three times slower than some other European countries to save lives. Together we need to campaign and raise awareness about this statistic to work to reduce the number of babies dying. **#15babiesaday**

For more information about the campaign please visit www.sands.org.uk/15babiesaday

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT SANDS

Other ways to support Sands



Buy a Sands Rose

The Sands Rose was created in memory of Paul and Tanya Byrne's daughter Eloise who was stillborn on Mother's Day 2004 and its sale raises funds for Sands.

It is a stunning hybrid tea rose with large vivid salmon-orange blooms that are offset by dark glossy foliage. It was created in partnership between growers C&K Jones and Eloise's parents and was launched by our Patron David Haig, at the Hampton Court Palace Flower in 2006. £1.50 from the sale of each rose goes directly to Sands.

They can be purchased from C & K Jones by mail order, visit www.jonestherose.co.uk or call **01829 740663** to order a catalogue.

Collect stamps and foreign coins for Sands

An easy activity that helps raise funds from something that would normally be thrown away or left in a drawer somewhere. Why not get your friends, family, colleagues or local school involved too? Get in touch for additional resources.



GIVE-A-CAR

Convert your scrap car into money for Sands. You can choose to donate all the proceeds, or give us half and keep half for yourself. Here's how... Just Contact Giveacar (www.giveacar.co.uk or 020 7736 4242), fill in their form or call the office - all they need is a couple of minutes to go through your details.

Once they have your approval, a collection agent will call you in order to arrange a convenient pick-up time. For more information about this initiative please go to www.sands.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/other-things-you-can-do

Knit or Crochet for us

Sadly demand for our Always Loved, Never Forgotten Memory Boxes remains constant and our stock of hand knitted or crochet blankets need to be maintained. These blankets are a very special part of the box as each is handmade and we have been told how much comfort they bring to parents after the death of a baby.

The pattern is very simple as can be knitted with or without the lace edging. Please note that for a number of reasons we only use white blankets. Please can you spread the word to family and friends.

The pattern can be downloaded from our website or we can send it to you, just get in touch.



Join our Volunteer Events Team

There are lots of ways to get involved with our Volunteer Events Team, and it's also a great way to meet other Sands supporters and volunteers! Join **#TeamSands** today and help Sands make a real difference to our Fundraisers.



Join our Kerb Crew!

Help us support our amazing Team Sands members by making a lot of noise and cheering with us as they take on a range of incredible challenge events throughout the year!

Meet and greet Team Sands!

Help make Team Sands feel extra special as they undertake a range of amazing events throughout the year! By volunteering your time to meet, greet and congratulate our fundraisers at a variety of events throughout the UK you will help make their fundraising experience one they will never forget!

Lend your helping hands!

We're currently looking for physiotherapy and podiatry volunteers to lend their skills at select events. If you are able to come along and offer post-race massages, or tend to the battered feet of our brilliant runners and cyclists, we would love to hear from you! This experience would look great on any CV – and more importantly you'll know that your efforts provided the perfect end to our fundraisers' challenge!

Capture our fundraisers on camera!

Team Sands have hundreds of runners and cyclists taking part in a variety of fantastic challenges throughout the year – and we are looking for budding volunteer photographers who will help us get some great action shots of them! If you are able to join us with your camera to capture our athletes, please get in touch! Along with the possibility of your images being used in future promotional materials* you will be a part of some of the biggest challenge events in the UK!

All our Team Sands volunteers will be provided with a free Sands Volunteer Pack which includes:

- T-shirt
- Volunteer lanyard
- Sands thunder sticks and hand-waving flags
- A copy of Spotlight on Sands

Volunteers help Sands do more than we could within our normal limits by providing more support and raising more awareness than we could do on our own, so thank you so much for your tremendous help.

Contact our Fundraising team today on **020 3897 6092** or at **teamsands@sands.org.uk** to find out how you can become a Team Sands Events Volunteer today!



NETWORKS & VOLUNTEERING

Local Projects



Some of the bigger projects that Sands volunteers take forward can take years to complete. But when the final launch day comes, the hard work is worth it.

In October 2016, Swindon Sands proudly opened the new Forget-me-not suite at Great Western Hospital, which features a delivery room and a separate family lounge area.

The delivery room, while featuring all the clinical equipment necessary to make it a safe working environment, is tastefully decorated and furnished to offer comfort and calm. It is in an area of the maternity department that is set apart and more private. The suite is the product of combined efforts by hospital staff and Swindon Sands, who had been fundraising for six years to achieve their goal.

Laura Kirby-Deacon (pictured top right alongside Cathy Milburn) said: "You're exposed to an environment that should be a really joyous occasion – you come into hospital and find out that your baby has sadly passed away in the womb but you still have to deliver your baby and that is very challenging. Within this space they can create their lifetime of memories with their baby away from other parents".

Sandy Richards, Clinical Midwifery Manager, said: "This room was very much more clinical looking before – we obtained the funding from government to do the building work and then Sands have secured the money to do all the furnishing and decorating. Our whole ethos is to provide an environment that is a home from home and this is an extension of that – it makes a difference".

"Our whole ethos is to provide an environment that is a home from home and this is an extension of that – it makes a difference."

Growing the Networks

Shetland training

One of our key goals is to increase the coverage offered by Sands so that every bereaved parent or family member can access support when they need it. Our Network Coordinators work with new volunteers to set up a new Group where there is none, and to revitalise an existing Group that needs new supporters. Setting up a Group can be a long process. Even after we get the right volunteers in place to be able to take things forward, they then need training and support from staff and fellow volunteers in nearby Groups to get up and running properly.

One of our more interesting new Groups completed their set up process last year and Shetland Sands is now a fully functioning member of Sands' Scottish Network. This Group faces the challenge of providing services spread over as many as 16 inhabited islands, and the Networks and Volunteering team has enjoyed working with this committed band to plan out ways to deal with this unique situation.



Volunteers from the New Shetland Sands Group with Scottish Network Coordinator Ann McMurray

King's Lynn Siblings Party

The Networks and Volunteering team also works closely with Groups that have begun to struggle a bit. A common story is that several volunteers have stepped away, and one or two individuals are left keeping things going as best they can. This can be a stressful situation, and volunteering can turn into an obligation, so Network Coordinators try to support the Group by bringing in new volunteers. They also work with the existing volunteers to develop a structure that supports any new recruits.

A core of volunteers has been keeping King's Lynn Sands going for some years. Following some close work with Rose, Sands' East Network Coordinator, the Group is really moving forward again.

After success at befriender training in October, and with a real desire to spread the word about King's Lynn Sands and its future, Angela and Danielle, Treasurer and Chair of the Group, arranged a Sands Siblings Christmas party. They had a bouncy castle, games, tea and coffee and a buffet. The children made tree decorations of their own design to take home, and they all met Father Christmas and received a small gift.

Everyone was pleased to hear the Group is looking to increase activities in the future and many offered their support. The party raised awareness of the Group, and the work of Sands in the area, brought several families together and was exceptionally well received. A sincere thank you to Angela and Danielle for their continued efforts to grow King's Lynn Sands.



Remembering our loved ones

Every year, on the first Saturday in December, Torbay Hospital holds a family craft afternoon in memory and celebration of babies who have died.

Organised by a team of midwives, nurses and the hospital chaplaincy, it is a wonderful event with many families coming back each year. There is a mixture of emotions; sorrow and grief, but also joy and so much love.

The craft afternoon started due to concern that not everybody would be able to make the Sunday afternoon Baby Loss Remembrance Service, and that some families might not feel able to attend the service with their other children. So it was decided to start a family activity session on the same weekend, and it shares a theme with the remembrance service: First Teardrops, then rainbows.

Linda Simmonds, Hospital Liaison for South Devon Sands, said: "I have been involved from the beginning. I suggested that we could do a large-scale painting using the handprints of the families in bright colours. Of course, if you suggest something then you have to be prepared to do it, so I have now helped supervise the painting of what I think was my seventh banner".

"I love being at the craft afternoon as it gives me a chance to do something with my younger daughters to remember their older sisters. It is great to see all the children talking to each other and telling the helpers the stories of their brothers and sisters for whom they are painting a pebble or decorating an angel."

Derby Christmas Tree

Sands volunteers know that the holidays can be a very difficult time. Derby Sands made sure their memorial garden was open every day over the Christmas period, from 9am until 4pm, for anyone who wanted quiet time to reflect and remember.

It looked beautiful with Christmas trees full of decorations dedicated to special babies. There were lots of flowers and wreaths as well. One grateful lady noted on Facebook that it was "Beautiful and serene."

Many other Sands Groups across the UK held memorial events over the Christmas period. Here are a few pictures showing the care and attention given by the volunteers that can make such a difference for families remembering babies taken from us too soon.



A Day in the Life of a Network Coordinator

The role of the Network Coordinator is an interesting and diverse one. I support Sands Groups in the Network to deliver Sands' three core aims at a local level and to strengthen the communication between the local Groups and the rest of the charity, as well as between the Groups in the Network.

I am the first point of contact for the Groups in my Network, dealing with initial enquiries and providing support and guidance via email, telephone and face to face visits. I also resolve any concerns or issues raised by Groups, and liaise with other staff in Sands to ensure effective communication. I help Groups to share ideas and support each other via regular email updates, bi-monthly Network calls, quarterly Network newsletters and annual Network days.

Alongside supporting the Groups in the Network, I get involved in local and regional projects and events. I network with healthcare professionals and other professionals in the region via NHS Newborn and Maternity Networks. This allows me to keep abreast of what is going on locally in terms of maternity and neonatal care.

I link with and become the first point of contact for hospitals where there is no local Sands Group. I work with these hospitals to identify how Sands can support them to support bereaved parents/families, providing them with resources such as Family Support Packs and arranging for the hospitals to access Sands Bereavement Care training.

I attend Maternity Services Liaison Committees (MSLC) when the local Group is not able to send a representative or where there is no local Group. Attending MSLCs is a good way of keeping bereavement care on the agenda at hospitals. I also arrange meetings with other professionals who have contact with bereaved families, for example



hospital chaplains of all faiths, registrars, and counsellors. This allows me to liaise and collaborate with other organisations and professionals about Sands, gaining a better understanding of what is needed to support bereaved families appropriately and effectively.

I have also have the privilege of representing Sands at conferences such as the RCM Maternity Support Worker conference and Institute of Health Visitors conference.

Attendance at events such as these is a great opportunity to raise awareness of the work that Sands does at both a national and local level and I really enjoy attending.

In my role I have had the opportunity to contribute to some local and regional maternity and neonatal reviews. I have tried to ensure

that the voice of bereaved parents and families are heard and represented.

I hope that I have been able to demonstrate how varied and interesting the Network Coordinator role is and how privileged I am to be able to support and work alongside the fantastic volunteers in my Network.

Nathalya Kennedy, Sands West Network Coordinator



Nathalya Kennedy (left) collecting a donation from a local crematorium

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

At Sands, we understand how devastating it is when a baby dies as many of us have been through the experience ourselves.

We know that everyone grieves differently and there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Each person needs different types of support and this can change over time. Some people may be happy to talk, others might take comfort from reading about others' experiences or writing down their own feelings while some may prefer to meet face to face and share their experiences or writing down their own feelings.



Many parents contact Sands soon after their baby has died, while others contact us several years, even decades, later.

We have recently refreshed the design of our free Family Support Pack. It contains a copy of all our individual support booklets. These include information specifically aimed at fathers, grandparents, siblings and other family members as well as friends. There are also practical booklets that cover arranging a funeral, returning to work and one aimed at employers.

All our booklets are available to read or download on our website. Family Support Packs are available free to hospitals and health professionals. Please visit the Sands website or call **020 3031 8898** to order these or other bereavement resources for your unit.



Sands Helpline



One of the many fantastic things about Sands is the choice we are able to offer bereaved families in how they access support after the death of a baby.

Alongside the amazing work of the Sands Groups, over the last year the Bereavement Support Services team have offered support to thousands of people who have contacted Sands through the national telephone helpline, by email, social media or used the forum.

From April 2016 to March 2017, we answered around 3,000 calls on the helpline and responded to just over 2,200 helpline emails. Around 60% of calls and emails were from families who had been bereaved within the last six months and 40% were from those who had been bereaved more than six months ago. We recognise that there is no set timeline or time limit for grief and this is one way in which Sands is there to support those affected by the death of a baby whenever they might need it. As bereaved parents themselves, our helpline team bring their own experience to help them understand and respond sensitively to Sands helpline callers.

Working closely with the Communications team, the Bereavement Support Services team advised researchers and script writers for a recent Coronation Street storyline about late miscarriage. The helpline saw a surge in calls following the programme and was also able to support those affected by a similar storyline in the radio soap, The Archers. We will continue to

work closely with media partners to ensure sensitive awareness raising and highlighting the support Sands can offer bereaved families.

Looking to the Future

We are continually looking at ways to improve and develop our services. From 29 March, the Sands Helpline has a new number **0808 164 3332** which is free to call from landlines and mobiles. This means that cost will not be a barrier to anyone wishing to contact the helpline.

We would also like to work towards extending the opening hours of the helpline so that we can be there whenever anybody needs us. We know there is a need out there and we want to meet it.

To do this, we need your ever generous support and commitment. Setting up a regular donation to Sands will help us improve our ongoing services will help ensure bereaved families are able to receive the support they need during their darkest times. See page 13 for more information.

From April 2016 to March 2017, we answered around 3,000 calls on the helpline and responded to just over 2,200 helpline emails.

Giving in Memory

A special way of remembering a loved one can be to raise money in memory of their life however short. It can also provide a comfort to those who know that their donations are going to help others going through difficult times.

Donations in lieu of flowers

You may wish to ask people attending the funeral or remembrance event for your baby or loved one to make donations to Sands instead of bringing flowers. Asking friends and family to make a donation in lieu of flowers at a funeral event is a lovely way to celebrate and acknowledge the life of a loved one. Donations we receive in memory are very special to us. Supporting Sands in memory of a loved one is an incredible way to remember them and to help to try to reduce the number of precious babies dying every day in the UK.

How do I organise a funeral collection?

We have collection envelopes and other materials which are able to be used at funeral services. You can order collection envelopes using our online form www.sands.org.uk/give-memory

Create a Sands tribute fund

A Sands tribute fund is an online memorial dedicated to your precious baby or other loved one which you can share with family and friends. Your fund will display all the donations made in their memory. Find out more about Sands tribute funds: www.sands.org.uk/always-loved-funds

Thank you

On behalf of Sands, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to you and your friends and family, for choosing to support us during this incredibly difficult time.

Support

If you would like further support, we are here to help over the phone **0808 164 3332** or email helpline@sands.org.uk



Sands Garden Remembrance Event

The Sands Garden Remembrance event is held annually at the National Memorial Arboretum, offering anyone affected by the death of a baby the opportunity to meet with others in a peaceful atmosphere. This year's event will be held on Saturday, 10 June 2017. More details can be found via our website.

The Sands Garden is dedicated to the memory of all babies who have died. At the heart of the garden is a Portland stone sculpture of a baby, created by the respected sculptor John Roberts. Adults and children are encouraged to sit and touch it. There are also two beautiful handmade oak benches.

Families are invited to write their baby's name or a short message on stones or pebbles. Small, flat stones will be made available on the day which you can write using an indelible marker pen. You can then place your stone at the side of the path that leads into the garden. Alternatively, you are welcome to bring your own stone; all we ask is that it is no more than the size of your palm.

Please do not leave any other objects or items other than stones in the Sands garden.

The café on site serves food and refreshments or you may bring a picnic. Feel free to mix with other families, but equally there are plenty of tranquil spots where you can spend a quiet moment.

The National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7AR, is open all year round from 9am until dusk (except Christmas Day).

www.thenma.org.uk

Sands Lights of Love Services

Our annual Lights of Love services are held at venues across the UK in the first half of December. This year the services will be held on 8 December 2017.

In 2016 Lights of Love services took place in Huddersfield, London, Scotland, Nottingham, Northern Ireland, Wales, Liverpool, Guernsey, Exeter, Durham and Wearside, Warrington, and Scarborough.

Lights of Love services are family friendly evenings of traditional carols, reading and musical performances. All services are free to attend.

If you would like to know more about Lights of Love, or if you would like to hold an event in 2017, email Sands Bereavement Support and Awareness Specialist, Erica Stewart, at erica.stewart@sands.org.uk

PERSONAL STORIES & POEMS

Butterflies never let me forget

by Shannon Creechan

Daydreaming. Something I do often, but not always with the dedicated fixture I was experiencing as I gazed outside my window at the beautiful butterfly flying through the sky. It flitted and fluttered around until, finally, coming to rest on my windowsill, its delicate wings folded carefully. One wing was decorated with a large eye shape, making me feel as though the creature was watching me (though it clearly wasn't). A crystal blue sky with only a few clouds lingering on the horizon became the background to this magnificent butterfly. It was almost the perfect picture, almost.

Suddenly, dark grey clouds appeared in my line of vision, darkening the sky a little and I was reminded of the fact that life can crawl into a cocoon and turn into a beautiful butterfly. The same way babies can be nurtured in their mothers' wombs before coming into the world, all cute and crumpled, a miracle of life. If only everything was as perfect. Not a single breath was made when Daniel came into the world.

My Auntie Angie (a natural mother) was overwhelmed to find that she was pregnant just over three years ago and avidly bought bottles, dummies, shoes, blankets, toys; all for her long awaited baby. She was forever bright cheeked, red as a rose and beautiful for that same reason. Her eagerness spread through the full family, our excitement increasing as her due date grew nearer and nearer.

It was a normal Saturday, and

also the date, on which the baby was due, I was up early and away to dancing, after which my dad picked me up. As soon as I got into the car I knew something wasn't right. My dad, normally so strong and brave had tracks from tears subdued, unlike his normal self. When I asked what was wrong he simply told me 'not now'. Fear slipped his icy fingers round my chest and gripped me tight, a cloak of depression engulfing me. What was wrong? Why was my dad so upset that he didn't want to tell me? My mind ran riot, thinking up one scenario after another, each one worse than before. I shivered as I looked at my dad, I couldn't understand why I was being kept in the dark, no matter how bad it was I wanted to know...

I blinked hard and adjusted my eyes to the darkness outside my window. The clouds had collected and clustered together making the blue sky disappear completely, and mist drew up from the ground, leaving only a faint sketch of the world. But still the butterfly was there. Its colours dulled and further darkened like the shroud of grief smothering my heart and drawing me into a deep sense of reality that nothing is perfect.

My dad waited until I was in my bedroom with my sister Jodie and he walked in slowly handing me my baby sister Erin and sitting down between us. In a quiet voice he simply told us that my Auntie Angie had delivered a baby boy that morning called Daniel, but... he was stillborn.

Tears burnt my eyes for mere seconds before sliding down

my face, my torrent of misery crashing down onto my cheeks and I grabbed Erin tightly, holding her close, feeling as if only I could protect her from the evil of the world. She blinked up at me innocently with no idea of the situation in hand and I in turn cried even more. The innocence of a baby being torn away before he even got a chance to live, was too much for me to take in. Why would God let this happen? There can't be a God. If there was a God then he wouldn't have died. At that moment in a childish fit of unfairness, I hated God with a passion. A wave of fear and anger filled me as I howled into Erin's tiny body and I thought of the fragility and delicateness of a newborn baby, how tiny and sweet he must be.

Like a butterfly falling from the cocoon he came into the world. However he wasn't given the chance to live. The thunderclouds clashed and banged, hard outside my window and I jumped. For a long minute I sat watching the downpour of rain almost wash away the butterfly, but just missing its tiny body and I slowly let the rain sweep me away, and it began to take me with it, into the darkness of the night to come.

The visit to the hospital, and seeing my tiny baby cousin lying there in his destroyed mothers arms is now a blur. The emotions of that day all rolled into one, grief. Around me everyone was grieving for this tiny baby lost to us forever. The unavoidable funeral came all too quickly and that morning I sat in the church,

silent tears streaming down my face not able to take my eyes off of the small white coffin that was placed at the front of the altar.

A group of flowers was arranged around the coffin, with a single cloth butterfly drifting out of a rose. The purity and delicateness of the butterfly instantly related to my baby cousin and my aunt bent down at the end of the mass to stroke the butterfly within the flowers.

Later, as the coffin was lowered into the ground, grief wound itself around my body, holding me tight, and paralysing me to the world. As me and my two cousins talked about Daniel a single butterfly flew by, a red and orange butterfly, delicate and beautiful, it rested on the ground at our feet for a second before moving on, fluttering away into the distance. Since that moment, (as weird as it seems) I have found butterflies both a comfort and a remembrance of my baby cousin. Daniel. Since telling my aunt about that strange and somehow relieving moment she has always worn a chain around her neck with a butterfly on it. I think she also senses the connection that I do between this delicate creature and baby Daniel.

The silence of the world outside my window brought me back to my senses and I looked out to see that the rain had stopped, leaving a dark blue sky with sprinkles of stars all around. The sight of the gorgeous butterfly, so serene and beautiful, began to burn my eyes and it moved (catching my eye with its fake one) and flew slowly, away.

Disbelief

by Cathy Wallace

Most Wonderful

by Terry Buchanan

The most wonderful thing I never saw
Was a window frame and an open door

The most wonderful thing I have never smelt
Was a chocolate bar and a leather belt

The most wonderful place I have never been
Was a small back room and a village green

The most wonderful time I have never had
Was a kiss from mum and a cuddle from dad

The most wonderful thing I have never known
Was a pebble stone and an old dog bone
The most wonderful thing I have never missed
Was a lover's kiss in a secret tryst

The most wonderful thing I have never made
Was a piece of toast or a lemonade

The most wonderful thing I have never won
Was a teddy-bear or a tin pop-gun

The most wonderful thing I have never been
Was a play-cowboy or a may-pole queen

The most wonderful things are all forlorn
Because I was a new child stillborn

"Bit small for your dates" the doctor says. "So what?" I think.

However, I am suddenly divided between slight concern and trying not to jump to wrong conclusions. I think positively, "I've got as far as thirty-three weeks, the baby is obviously alive and kicking, millions of people have perfectly healthy babies at this stage, albeit somewhat premature, what could possibly go wrong?" My mother's words "Oh, some people make such a lot of fuss over the whole thing", spring from nowhere.

The room is small, square, without windows and claustrophobic. The scanning equipment is grey and cold matching my now poor circulation and slightly clammy hands. I make light conversation but fail to take in that my comments are not being responded to in the normal friendly way of medical staff, and that they are not looking me in the eye. "Of course they are not looking at me directly" I think, "they are concentrating on what they are doing!".

However they are indeed talking softly between themselves but I can't make out what they are saying due to the hum of the equipment, or has my hearing independently started to shut down? The radiographer leaves the room.

The news is broken gently in almost a whispered tone. I'm unable to take in much of what is said, other than

two words which seem to stand out in the middle of the sentence "bad news". I know I'm in the room alone but feel the need to look round to check I am the one being addressed. The bare walls seem to be closing in and pulsating in time to my heartbeat. Inevitably the statutory cup of tea is offered but my throat seems to have closed up. Two pained faces give me the impression I'm not reacting in the required manner and these worsen when I imply that I intend to make my own way home on public transport.

My world is just starting to disintegrate but comfortingly outside in the drizzle, the street is busy as usual with double-deckers charging up and down, sweet papers stuck in hedgerows, cars jostling for position, people waiting bored silly at bus stops. A mother with a young child sits near me on the bus and I suddenly feel oddly uncomfortable and find myself staring at the child as if I'd never seen one before.

Like grains of sand falling through an upturned egg-timer, as every minute passes the realisation and hopelessness of my situation becomes more real. In fact I'm beginning to feel a bit tearful and wonder if I should have ordered a taxi... but taxis are for emergencies only, aren't they?

Our Angel Eva by James and Heather

Each life no matter how brief, changes this world forever. We sadly have to accept that the angels needed you more. Although our arms are empty, our hearts heavy we know you were too beautiful for this world.

We see the pain in the eyes of loved ones. Many hearts have been touched by you and the tears still continue to flow. You have left behind many broken hearts but all our hearts will unite and become one with love for you.

For the short time we were with you, the pain and sorrow briefly left the room. We held you in our arms and the world seemed a brighter place. We never wanted it to end, but those moments we will cherish. Whenever we feel sad, we will seek comfort in remembering your beautiful face.

Our hearts ache at the thought of what you could have achieved. The only comfort we can take is you will never feel any pain. No day shall pass that we won't think of you. You will hold a special place in our hearts eternally.

Goodbye my darling Eva, our shining star x x x.

Memories... by James Slattery

It doesn't take much for me to be back in that hospital room, where my world fell apart. A few words, a smell, a song and I am right back in that room reliving it all.

Some of the memories and flashbacks I experience sends a sensation around my body that I just can't describe. With no warning, it stops me in my tracks and takes a hold over me.

At first, I used to dread those situations, running to the toilets at work to hide away while I breakdown and cry and hope no one saw me.

I am a man and not used to showing emotion like that, not being in control left me feeling vulnerable. In order to try and gain control of my life again, I have had to go against what I am comfortable with and step outside of my boundaries.

Through time and the support of such things like counselling, I have learned to embrace the things I dreaded. When I experience flashbacks, I am embracing them. I now see it as 'Daddy & Eva time'. It gives me an opportunity to spend time thinking about Eva.

I use those occasions to connect with my daughter. Tears may flow, smiles may appear.

I have good days where I am positive, I have bad days where I am full of anger and sadness. But all that matters, is that I love her.

Emotion is a sign of strength, it shows you care...
Eva's Daddy



The Footprints booklets can be purchased from the Sands online shop.

My Appointment

by Lisa Burns

I'm drawn to the door; I sit surrounded by maybe eighty vacant blue chairs in an extensive waiting room, purposely sitting in front of my cream coloured nemesis.

I got the letter to come here six weeks ago; I impaled it on the kitchen notice board with a red pin, red for danger and I'd glance at it every now and then each time with a flash of a painful memory. I'm the only person in the room, waiting, listening, and staring, 20 minutes early. I peel off some of my winter layers trying not to look at the door or think about her. I select a magazine and begin to read some celebrity gossip, but it's no use before I know it I'm back there behind that door and tears fill my eyes.

Why did I agree to come back here? How did I think I would feel? I have an overwhelming need to leave; it's just too much. I can't do this; I can't stay here. What if my name is called through that door again and not one of the others? That would be the end of me. I force myself to stay seated all the time caressing my car keys in my pocket thinking of putting them in the ignition and speeding away.

In the mist of the war of wills in my head, a small lady with cropped fair hair enters the waiting room. She's about 60 years old, and she's wearing white linen trousers and a pale blue t-shirt. She walks past the rows of empty chairs and me, choosing to sit in the chair beside me where I had placed my handbag. I quickly remove it so she can sit. I'm in shock, it's like someone has waved a crisp white flag amidst a bloody battle, and I forget everything.

I can't take my eyes off her. "What time is your

appointment?" she asks, "19:30 what about you?" I reply.

She doesn't answer my question; she glances at the clock and releases a long soft sigh. She takes my hand that is only now beginning to thaw from the winter's evening; hers is surprisingly warm and welcomed.

She begins "I remember coming in here 40 years ago, it was the antenatal part then, I think it always was until recently," she still has hold of my hand. She moves her free hand and points to that door. The door that has resumed the meal it started on my heart and soul a few months earlier, eating away at the break extending its empire. She continues "I went through that door the last time I was here; I was pregnant with my first baby, the Doctor, an Indian lady, examined me and said there was a problem with the baby that I'd have to have an x-ray. I was taken back through that door after the x-ray; the doctor told me my baby hadn't grown properly, that I should have the baby in the next few days and it would be stillborn."

She gives my hand a tiny squeeze and continues. "A few days later I returned to the hospital and had my baby, a girl. That sort of thing was looked on differently in those days, I never saw her or held her, and she was taken away immediately. We didn't even get to give her a funeral. She was placed in a communal grave, I wasn't told where."

She sighs again "But that was how it was then. I've always longed to hold her, to name her, I have nothing just the memory. I've thought of her every day since." She turns and smiles at me a heartfelt smile, a knowing

smile, the tears I have fought off until now slide down my cheeks, she lets go of my hand and places her arm around me like a warm blanket, taking my hand again with her other and gives me an encouraging nod.

"I've been through that door," I begin "I was pregnant with my first baby, I was scanned and told a similar thing to you, and my daughter was also stillborn some weeks later. We held her, said the hardest of goodbyes and spent precious hours with her admiring how perfect and beautiful she was. We have a box filled with her things, we had a funeral and her ashes are safe in our house. We named her Evie, my arms still ache for her even now."

She rubs my arms and tells me as I choke back my sobs "It's a terrible thing to go through, you never get over it or lose the ache but you're not alone, you will be happy again. Your daughter is watching over you both, and you will all be together again one day." A door behind me opens and a voice calls my name Mrs Burns. "That's you," she says as she releases my hand "you have to go, you'll be fine now Lisa." I tell her thank you, gather my self control and my things, reluctantly, as I don't want to leave her and say goodbye. I don't want to go to my appointment.

As I leave the room 15 minutes later, and not before learning I was the last appointment and there are no other Doctors working. The waiting room is once again empty; she's gone as I knew she would be.

I put all my layers back on and make my way to the car, I drive home down the Lisburn Road and it begins to snow, then it dawns on me; it's winter.

She had no coat, no handbag; she chose a chair right beside me out of the eighty or more that were empty. She touched me... A stranger and I didn't feel in the slightest bothered by it or find it uncomfortable at any time, in fact I welcomed it. She knew my name. I begin to cry and a lethal combination of tears and snow blinding me forces me to pull over. I was alone in a situation and place I had been dreading for weeks, suffering from grief that I didn't really talk to anyone about. I didn't cry in the weeks, months, after Evie was born. I recall slipping out of rooms, hiding on stairs, pretending to go to the toilet, getting out of bed in the early hours to be alone... to cry. I heard sounds of deep pain come from my own body that I didn't know were possible. It frightened me. I was frightened of upsetting others, of making them uncomfortable, of putting them in a situation where nothing they could say or do would mend my broken heart.

Yet in the very hospital where my heart had been broken irreversibly I poured it all out with ease to a lady I'd never met.

Sat in my car at the side of the Lisburn Road my usually sceptical mind was totally opened. I didn't have a clue what had just happened or where that lady had come from. But what I did know was from that moment I would never again feel uncomfortable talking about my guardian angel... My Evie.

5 ways you can help someone whose baby has died

- 1. Talk about their baby** – ask them if they would like to spend some time talking about their baby. Sometimes people avoid the subject for fear of causing distress but many bereaved parents want their baby acknowledged and to hear their baby's name.
- 2. Let them know you are thinking about them** – a simple text, card or email will let them know you are thinking about them and their baby. If you know them well, you might want to call them and ask how they are. It's okay to ask 'How are you?'
- 3. Offer practical help** – when a baby dies it can be very hard for parents and families to do everyday tasks such as walking the dog, going shopping or cleaning the house. If you are in a position to do so, offer to help in a specific, practical way.
- 4. Remember their baby** – light a candle for their baby during Baby Loss Awareness week and send a photo of it to let them know you're thinking of them. Remember their baby's birthday and send them a 'thinking of you' message.
- 5. Give them the Sands Freephone helpline number 0808 164 3332** – our experienced helpline team offer a safe, confidential space for anyone affected by the death of a baby. We offer non-judgemental, compassionate support by telephone or email and may be able to refer them on to a local Sands group in their areas.

How you can help Sands

We depend on the extraordinary energies of our supporters to raise the vital funds that we need to deliver the wide range of services that we offer. Your donation could make a real difference.

- £10 could pay for a Family Support Pack to help provide information and support for bereaved families
- £20 could pay for a Memory Box to help bereaved parents build and keep memories of their baby
- £575 could support our Helpline for a day
- £1,500 could cover the cost of maintaining the Sands Remembrance Garden in the National Memorial Arboretum for a year

By setting up a regular gift today you can help make an ongoing difference to the support and care bereaved families receive, as well as working towards reducing the number of babies dying.

- £5 a month could help Sands sustain its helpline providing invaluable support to people affected by the death of a baby
- £10 a month could enable Sands to provide free Memory Boxes to health professionals, and training in how to help parents build memories of their baby
- £15 a month could help Sands support research that will save babies' lives

www.sands.org.uk

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Sands 
Stillbirth & neonatal death charity

