

Sands Application Information

Community Development Officer - Northern Ireland

September 2025

About Sands

Sands exists to save babies' lives and ensure that anyone affected by pregnancy loss or baby death receives the support and care they need.

We work to ensure that everyone affected by pregnancy and baby loss receives the care and support they need. We provide training so that everyone who comes into contact with bereaved parents and families has the knowledge, skills and confidence to offer sensitive, safe care and support. Our accredited training is available across the UK.

We provide bereavement support services both nationally through our Freephone helpline, online community and resources, as well as locally through a network of around 100 regional support groups based across the UK and run by trained befrienders.

Additionally, we promote improvements in practice and support research to better understand the causes of deaths and save babies' lives.

Sands raises awareness of baby loss and works with government, key influencers and other stakeholders to make reducing the number of babies dying a priority nationally and locally.

Over the past 47 years, Sands has grown into a national charity with a powerful vision shared by dedicated volunteers, fundraisers, members, donors, healthcare professionals, partners, staff and bereaved parents and families.

Sands has grown its income by 40% since 2012 and, as part of our strategic plan, is focusing on how we can make the biggest different to the lives of bereaved families and save babies' lives. To find out more, visit www.sands.org.uk

Our vision at Sands is for a world where fewer babies die and anyone affected by the death of a baby receives the best care and support for as long as they need, wherever they live in the UK.

Join us and help create a world where fewer babies die.

Sands Staff Benefits

Annual Leave

Staff receive 28 days annual leave per annum pro rata, plus bank holidays. Staff will be required to take 3 days annual leave during the period between Christmas & New Year.

Employee Assistance Services

As part of its commitment to employee wellbeing, Sands offers all Staff access to our Employee Assistance service which offers free and confidential counselling and wellbeing support. Support is available on a range of issues including legal, financial, emotional, health, and work-related concerns.

Sand Cycle to Work Scheme

Sands has teamed up with Cycle Solutions to provide a Cycle to Work Scheme, which you can join to make considerable savings on the cost of a new bike and equipment.

Sands Pension Scheme

Subject to eligibility, you will be automatically enrolled into the Aviva Personal Pension scheme as soon as your employment commences. You can decide whether to remain in the scheme and/or make additional voluntary contributions if you wish.

Life Insurance

All Staff are covered by a Life Insurance Policy which pays 3 x annual salary to nominated beneficiaries. Staff also have access to additional services from Legal and General including legal and financial support, a medical helpline, and a health and wellbeing platform. Additionally, Staff have access to a wide range of shopping offers and discounts, plus advice on finding and funding later life care for their loved ones or themselves.

Flexible Working

All Staff can apply for flexible working with effect from their first date of employment.

Maternity Pay

Staff on maternity leave are paid their full salary for the first 26 weeks of their period of leave.

Tickets for Good

All Staff have membership of a platform which offers free and discounted tickets to a wide range of entertainment events.

Leave for the Death of a Baby or Pregnancy Loss

Any member of Staff affected by the death of baby or pregnancy loss will be granted leave paid at their normal salary, regardless of the type of loss.

Adoption Pay

Staff on adoption leave are paid their full salary for the first 26 weeks of their period of leave.

Volunteering Leave

Staff can take 2 days of paid leave per year to volunteer for another charity

Staff Reward and Recognition Scheme

All Staff can participate in a monthly Reward and Recognition Scheme

Sands is a vibrant, growing charity!

With a clear strategy, Sands is repositioning as a learning, developing organisation which aims to achieve excellence through people and offers a collegiate, collaborative working environment – making it an especially exciting time to join the charity.

Sands is an inclusive and diversity-friendly employer. We are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively. We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and do not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, colour, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age or any other category protected by law.

About the role

Sands offers support to anyone affected by the death of a baby.

Our volunteers are incredible! They run peer support, community-based activity, build relationships with hospitals, run football teams, cheer at events and much more. Putting them first and enabling the activity they deliver is the primary goal of the Community and Volunteering Team.

Local peer-led bereavement support is a core part of what we do here at Sands. This is primarily delivered by Support Groups and Sands United football teams run by dedicated volunteers right across the UK, most of whom are bereaved themselves. There are 84 Groups and 40 Sands United team across the UK who provide safe and welcoming spaces to be there for each other.

This is a high-profile and exciting new role which is responsible for ensuring that anyone affected by baby loss or the death of a baby has the chance to access Sands peer led activities in Northern Ireland, promoting sport and activities for health, wellbeing and support services and groups, ensuring that all sections of the community are aware of available activities and where they can go to be part of the community.

We are looking for successful, demonstrable experience of working with minoritised communities and a good working understanding of the barriers people experience accessing bereavement support and care in statutory, health and community settings.

With experience of coordinating volunteering programmes on a regional or national basis, you will be passionate and knowledgeable about the potential for volunteering within the charity sector.

You will have excellent communication skills suitable for a range of different audiences and environments, with significant experience of volunteer management and relationship building.

Additionally, you will have experience of working with marginalised communities together with an understanding of the barriers to accessing bereavement support that these communities encounter.

To apply:

Please submit your CV, together with a supporting statement that demonstrates how you meet the criteria in the person specification to recruitment@sands.org.uk.

CVs and supporting statements should be sent as attachments to an email in either Word or PDF format. The title of the attachments should be your first name, surname and either CV or supporting statement e.g. "Name CV"

Please also complete the Diversity and Equality Monitoring Form and send this with your application.

Closing date for applications: 8th October 2025

Interview Dates: w/c 20th October 2025

As we have limited staff resources we are unable to provide candidates with feedback about their applications. **Interviews will be held online.**

Job Description

Job Title:	Community Development Officer (Northern Ireland)
Responsible to:	Volunteering Development Lead
Location:	Home-based, with some travel
Region Remit:	Northern Ireland
Contract:	Permanent
Hours:	28 hours per week. The role requires significant flexibility to work evenings and weekends.
Salary:	£24,800 per annum (£31,000 pro rata) plus £250 Home Worker Allowance per annum (£312 pro rata)

Main Purpose of Job

Local peer-led bereavement support is a core part of what we do here at Sands. This is primarily delivered by Support Groups and Sands United run by dedicated volunteers right across the UK, most of whom are bereaved themselves. There are 84 groups and 40 Sands United team across the UK who provide safe and welcoming spaces to be there for each other.

That's not all, in the community there are volunteers who liaise with hospitals and maternity teams, fundraise as part of their Team or Group, knit and crochet for Sands and much more.

As a Sands Community Development Officer, you'll make sure that anyone affected by baby loss or the death of a baby has the chance to access Sands peer-led activities promoting sport and activities for health, wellbeing and support services and groups, ensuring that all sections of the community are aware of available activities and where they can go to be part of the community. We are looking for successful, demonstrable experience of working with minoritised communities and a good working understanding of the barriers people experience accessing bereavement support and care in statutory, health and community settings.

The link between good mental health and physical activity is well known and Sands' peer to peer activities have shown how beneficial connection with other bereaved parents in a shared endeavour can be. SUFC football teams are currently the primary Sands' sporting activity, and we are looking to grow these teams, as well as develop new activity across all communities, such as running clubs, crafting groups, walking groups, choirs. This link stretches into other Sands activity such as that delivered by the income teams, so cross team collaboration is a key component of this job.

In this role you'll be the connector for current and future volunteers, sharing information, enabling activity-related programmes, as well as family-engagement and peer support activities in your region. You'll be the person enabling volunteers to make peer-to-peer support and activity-based support happen in, with and for communities by raising awareness of everything Sands can provide.

The central aim is to increase access to and participation in Sands Community activities through enabling and supporting volunteers.

Responsibilities

As a Community Development Officer, you'll need to:

Be an opportunity-spotter and connector:

- Proactively work with the wider Community and Volunteering Team to identify opportunities for new recruitment of volunteers, expansion of community and the creation of new volunteer roles to support activity in your region.
- Use your experience of working with marginalised and under-represented communities to reach those not currently supported by Sands and develop community activities and support accordingly.
- Focussing on enabling volunteers to deliver activity across all Sands teams - connecting with the relevant Sands' teams for their resources, guidance and support.
- Proactively identify opportunities to grow the local bereavement support offer through support groups, sport and wellbeing activities and support the delivery and implementation of UK wide plans in your area
- Proactively develop a range of partnerships with organisations, hospitals and initiatives focused on Sands' work and connecting with the right staff team at Sands for delivery. E.g. Bereavement in the Workplace training, Sands' Healthcare professionals training, Campaigning and signposting to Sands' bereavement support
- Coordinate, deliver and promote relevant activities and Sands events in your defined geographical area, often within a specific community, demographic or to targeted groups of people seldom reached with support following baby loss.
- Seek opportunities for local awareness raising, including through enabling volunteers and those who are part of Sands to use their voices, so that anyone affected by baby loss is more aware of the local support opportunities available to them.
- Working collaboratively with Income Teams to ensure that all income generating activity is directed to and stewarded by them, that all money raised supports all Sands activities and is consistent with strategic growth.
- Use your networks to promote Sands' fundraising challenges across the region as a powerful tool to support parents in creating a legacy for their babies
- Working closely with Sands' Partnerships and Philanthropy team, and Development Leads, you will ensure any potential community partnership meets Sands' ethical standards and any financial partnership leads are handed over.

Deliver on peer support and activity development:

- In partnership with the wider Community and Volunteering Team, and the Programme Leads, embed evolving structures for peer-to-peer support activity to support volunteers.
- In partnership with the BSS team, develop strong referral routes and signposting to ensure volunteers and supporters have access to Sands' accredited and trauma-informed services
- Support volunteers, Groups and Teams, to transform ideas into action (within remit of our programmes and in line with Sands aims)

- Work with Programme Leads, volunteers and the extended community to ensure volunteers are creating physically and psychologically safe places for support, including elements of health & safety standards and trauma-informed practice.
- Liaise with and escalate to Development and Programme Leads to support the handling of issues such as safeguarding, good practice in involvement and learning opportunities for volunteers

Support good practice in community and volunteer development:

- Enable volunteers to deliver activities through good volunteer management practice, pro-actively navigating challenges, and providing support and guidance.
- Provide initial guidance and point of contact for Support Group and Sands United funding opportunities and storytelling, liaising when needed with the Philanthropy and Partnerships Team, Communications and Engagement Team and Senior Volunteering Manager.
- Practice and support excellent standards in all aspects of inclusion and diversity, particularly in reaching marginalised groups and enabling volunteers to provide inclusive support spaces.
- Maintaining accurate records, following Community and Volunteering Team practice for communication tracking and process delivery

Community in Northern Ireland:

- In collaboration with relevant colleagues, work collaboratively and inclusively with pregnancy and baby loss charities in NI ensuring inclusive ways of working and ensuring that Sands is seen as a welcoming place for all
- Ensure volunteers in NI are working in line with national volunteering practice and ways of working
- Promote and signpost fundraisers and potential financial partners to the correct team and deliver excellent storytelling to support national fundraising
- Keep track of and refer to relevant teams any devolved nation policy developments and hospital care issues. Work in collaboration to ensure a consistent response where appropriate.
- Work in collaboration to identify and signpost opportunities to become involved with Sands' campaigning, hospital liaison, community parent speaker roles and to join our Insights Voices work, to enable volunteers and bereaved parents to grow and evolve their support of and from Sands.

What we're looking for:

Beliefs:

- You'll have a belief that equality and inclusion is an essential part of community engagement and this will show in your behaviours
- You'll understand the significant potential that volunteers have in the delivery of peer-to-peer support and in enabling organisations to achieve their goals

- You'll understand the potential of community building amongst the baby loss bereavement community
- Empathy with Sands cause, aims and values
- Sensitive and emotionally intelligent when it comes to understanding experiences of bereavement and what that means when working with volunteers who have a variety in experience of bereavement
- A commitment to good boundaries and the ability to separate any personal experiences from others' own stories and needs
- An understanding of the importance of safeguarding and appropriate escalation experience
- A strong belief in teamwork, sharing ideas, supporting colleagues and taking an active role in being part of a Community and Volunteering Team

Experience:

- Experience in volunteer-involvement good practice, volunteer management and successful relationship building
- Demonstrable experience of identifying and working with marginalised communities and creating safe spaces for all people
- Have an understanding of the barriers to accessing bereavement support, participating in community activity, and volunteering
- Experience of community-building and organising
- Experience of developing and delivering events in partnership with volunteers, fundraising teams or those in a community
- You'll have experience of recognising opportunities and using your initiative to take these opportunities forwards to fruition, seeking support, using teams' specialist guidance as required
- Experience of teamwork with a remote team and working collaboratively with teams across an organisation, utilising their skills, resources and experience

Core skills:

- Communication skills suitable for a range of different audiences and environments, including professional networks, influencing and difficult conversations
 - We are looking for someone who has the interpersonal and partnership skills to perform their role proactively, collaboratively and with cultural and knowledge-based sensitivity
 - Familiarity with Microsoft Office 365
 - Experience of using a CRM or VMS system
 - Active listening skills and ability to empathise with people's varying needs and experiences at the same time as building consensus
 - Strong personal organisational skills, both in the context of remote working, cross team and organisation working and working with external stakeholders
 - Experience of local level project management
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