

Sands & Tommy's Policy Unit

Working together
to save babies' lives

Head of Policy Unit: Job Description and Person Specification

Job Title: Head of Policy Unit

Responsible to: Director of Research, Policy and Education at Sands, Director of Research, Policy and Information at Tommy's

Location: Home based

Contract: Permanent

Salary: Up to £58k

Hours: 35 hrs per week

About Sands

Sands is the leading stillbirth and neonatal death charity and exists to reduce the number of babies dying and to support anyone affected by the death of a baby, before, during or shortly after birth.

Sands provides bereavement support services both nationally through its Freephone helpline, mobile app, 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.

Sands works in partnership with professionals, trusts and health boards and offers a range of training programmes and bereavement care resources to ensure that every bereaved parent and family receives the best possible care wherever they are in the UK.

Sands promotes improvements in practice and supports research to better understand the causes of baby deaths and work to save babies' lives.

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

About Tommy's

Tommy's was founded in 1992 ago by two obstetricians at St Thomas' Hospital, frustrated that they couldn't answer that simple question asked by too many parents: 'Why did my baby die?'

We are the largest charity funding research into the causes of miscarriage, stillbirth and premature birth. We also provide information for parents-to-be to help them have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

We are supported by people who refuse to accept that a baby's death is just 'one of those things'. The people who support us want to do something about the lack of research and information around pregnancy issues. Like us, they believe every parent has the right to a healthy pregnancy and baby.

We fund 5 research centres in the UK that investigate causes and find treatments for miscarriage, stillbirth and premature birth.

Our research centres also have clinics where we provide specialised antenatal care for women who are at high risk of having miscarriage, stillbirth and premature birth. They also have an opportunity to be part of our research through taking part in trials for pioneering new treatments.

They are under the care of a team of people who have a huge amount of knowledge, experience and understanding of the psychological effects of pregnancy loss.

Together with our teams of scientists and clinicians, they are helping us provide the evidence that will make antenatal care better for all.

We feel it's important to provide free, accurate and up-to-date information for medical professionals and parents-to-be around healthy pregnancy. We do this through our PregnancyHub.

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 Service

As part of our commitment to employee wellbeing, Sands offers independent, free and confidential counselling and information telephone service. Support is available on a range of issues including legal, financial, emotional, health issues and work-related concerns.

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.

Pension Scheme

Subject to eligibility, you will be automatically enrolled into the Aegon 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.

Vibrant, collaborative working

We aim to achieve excellence through people and offer a collegiate, collaborative working environment.

About the role

Sands and Tommy's are forming a Joint Policy Unit, working together towards halving the number of UK baby deaths by ensuring decision makers have access to up-to-date information, and maternity policy is informed by robust evidence.

We are collaborating to pull together evidence and identify the key changes needed to save babies lives, reduce inequalities and improve outcomes. Annually in the UK over 5,000 babies are stillborn or die within the first four weeks of life, with 1 in 5 pregnancies ending in miscarriage and around 60,000 babies born prematurely each year.

We know that 8 out of 10 term intrapartum stillbirths could be preventable with better care. Miscarriage is not 'just one of those things' – miscarriages need to be recorded, with standardised access to care across the UK and personal care pathways for women at highest risk. Successful tests and treatments to predict and prevent preterm birth have been developed, but at the moment access to these depends on where you live.

Tommy's and Sands are members of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance leading a Maternity Consortium that includes National Maternity Voices (NMV), the Pregnancy and Baby Charities Network (PBCN) and a number of community organisations. We will use our collective expertise to join up national and local voices behind a common agenda – to reduce health inequalities for families throughout the whole pregnancy journey from pre-conception and through the first year of a baby's life.

COVID-19 has cast a spotlight on the fragility of maternity safety initiatives as pressure on our stretched health and social care systems increased. We are now working together to help decision-makers ensure that babies are not at a higher risk of death because of postcode, ethnicity, or income.

This is an exciting time for both Sands and Tommy's as we embark on this venture together. We have high hopes for the impact that our organisations working jointly in the policy arena will have.

The Head of Policy will be crucial to the success of the joint unit; leading, shaping and coordinating the unit's work.

We are looking for an independent and assertive problem-solver, a policy expert who can manage multiple priorities, take the initiative, lead the national conversation and is excited as we are about taking the helm of this new venture for both of our organisations.

Responsibilities

- Lead the work of the Joint Policy Unit, developing and agreeing annual plans, reporting on key performance indicators
- Lead, motivate and develop all Public Policy Unit staff
- Identify and define appropriate metrics to hold governments across the UK to account on progress in reducing baby deaths and pre-term births.
- Produce Annual Reports on the progress of the maternity/neonatal systems in delivering the targets for reduction of stillbirth/neonatal death/pre-term birth, in addition to the production of other publications and briefings
- Deliver a programme of political engagement and communications activity to facilitate the work of the Public Policy Unit
- Support staff to deliver engagement activity across the sector to enable the voice of people with lived experience and experiencing health inequalities to inform national policy making and shape service delivery
- Undertake external stakeholder analysis across all four nations of the UK, developing and maintaining high level relationships to enhance our understanding of why babies die and the policy and practice changes needed to reduce the numbers
- Develop policy recommendations and evidence-based responses to national initiatives and consultations
- Compile, deliver and report on the Public Policy Unit budget, taking remedial action as required
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the role as required by the Director of Research, Education and Policy (Sands), the Director of Research, Policy and Information (Tommy's) and the Chief Executives of Sands and Tommy's
- Maintain a high level of confidentiality and professional conduct
- Ensure own technical and analytical skills are kept up-to-date.
- Participate in, and promote, a culture of continuous improvement.
- Support income generation activity, for example by contributing to the writing of funding proposals

Person Specification

- Passionate about the Joint Policy Unit's purpose and work
- An agile and inspiring leader that maintains a clear focus on evidence and impact
- Excellent interpersonal, negotiation and influencing skills, including ability to develop effective working relationships with politicians, senior leaders in health, researchers and charity colleagues

- Exceptional communication skills to engage both technical and non-technical audiences through all mediums
- Experience of strategy development and implementation
- A substantial track record of effectively leading and implementing policy and influencing programmes, driving change and achieving the desired impact
- Experience across research, data analysis, policy development, public affairs and communications
- A good knowledge of NHS structures and organisation in general, and of maternity and neonatal services in particular
- Significant experience of developing and implementing complex and high profile projects and partnerships.
- Considerable proven experience in research and data management, including analysing complex data and evaluating policy developments
- Successful, significant and relevant management and leadership experience
- Demonstrable commitment to addressing inequalities
- Strong organisational skills to manage multiple projects at pace, on time and on budget, including working effectively with experts and advisors