

30th March 2020

Dear Sands Members

We are writing to you in these extraordinary and challenging times to share with you some of the ways in which we think Sands might be impacted by external events, and what we need to do as a result.

We know that we all want to keep Sands safe through these difficult times so that once this is all over we can continue to make a difference to all those whose lives we touch. In order to do this we need to make some difficult decisions.

Potential impact on income

One of biggest challenges we face is an anticipated drop in fundraising income of potentially between 50 percent and anything up to 75 percent until the end of August and possibly beyond. This significant decline is because more than half of our income during this period comes from mass participation and community fundraising activities that are being cancelled or postponed, and from individuals and businesses who are feeling financial pressure themselves.

Sands is not unique in facing these unprecedented challenges with the entire charity sector having to tackle this crisis. We need to take urgent action now to ensure that Sands comes through this challenging period ready to pick up where we left off and ready to grow again.

Making savings

It is clear that we need to make substantial savings, and in order to do that we need to consider what it is that is essential for us to continue to do in light of the current external environment, and also to identify what needs to be paused in the meantime due to the current restrictions.

We face making some difficult decisions. At the heart of these decisions is the principle that we want to work together, as the Sands' family, to find a way through – with everyone being held and supported, everyone playing a role, and everyone contributing to solutions.

Sands is such a wonderful and unique organisation – we know that by working together we will come through this difficult time by being there for each other and by doing the right thing.

What it is essential to continue:

1. Ensure we are providing bereavement support for all those that need it in as many different ways as we can remotely (I have outlined these ways in the attached sheet)
2. Support healthcare professionals and the NHS in whatever way they need us to
3. Support work to identify the effects that COVID-19 may have on pregnant mothers and babies, and also the effects that the strain on the NHS might have – and ask government to take these into account

What we can do to save money:

1. Cut all non-essential expenditure and pause all our face-to-face activity until further notice (including training, events etc.)
2. Ask every single member of staff to take a reduction in salary, with more senior colleagues such as myself, directors and senior line managers taking a larger pay cut than other staff
3. Furlough a third of our staff in order to save money and avoid making redundancies

What we are doing to raise money in different ways:

1. Expand the number of ways for all supporters to fundraise online and through virtual events
2. Access government support where possible (such as furloughing staff)
3. Identify other funds and grants being offered to help charities at this time


These are difficult decisions to make, but we truly live in unprecedented times. Like everyone else in this situation from the government, to the rest of the charity sector and to individuals, we need to make short-term changes in order to keep Sands safe for you as members and for all those who need us.

This is not the sort of letter we had ever imagined writing to you, but we want you to know how much you are valued and how much your support means to Sands. Together, as the Sands family, we will get through this and come out the other side able to continue making a difference for everyone affected by the death of a baby.

With many thanks for your support and please know that we are here for you if you need us.



Oliver Reichardt
Chair of Board of Trustees



Clea Harmer
Chief Executive