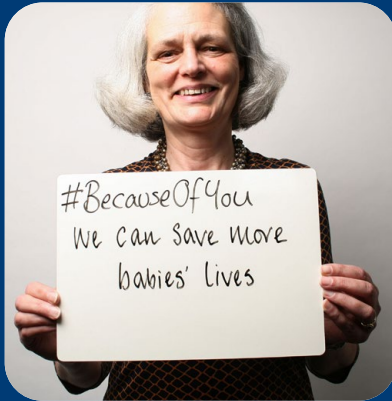




# Impact Report 2020-2021



# Welcome



While last year's Impact Report highlighted our initial response to COVID-19, this year's reflects our strength and perseverance.

Like so many charities, the start of the pandemic presented Sands with a significant drop in income. This came at a time when we also saw an unprecedented increase in demand for our services.

Everyone at Sands did a fantastic job in improving maternity safety and in supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby, both bereaved families and those supporting them. They also met these organisational challenges with tenacity and a wonderful sense of shared purpose.

I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped Sands continue working through this challenging year. Your support has made a difference when families needed us most.

**Clea Harmer**

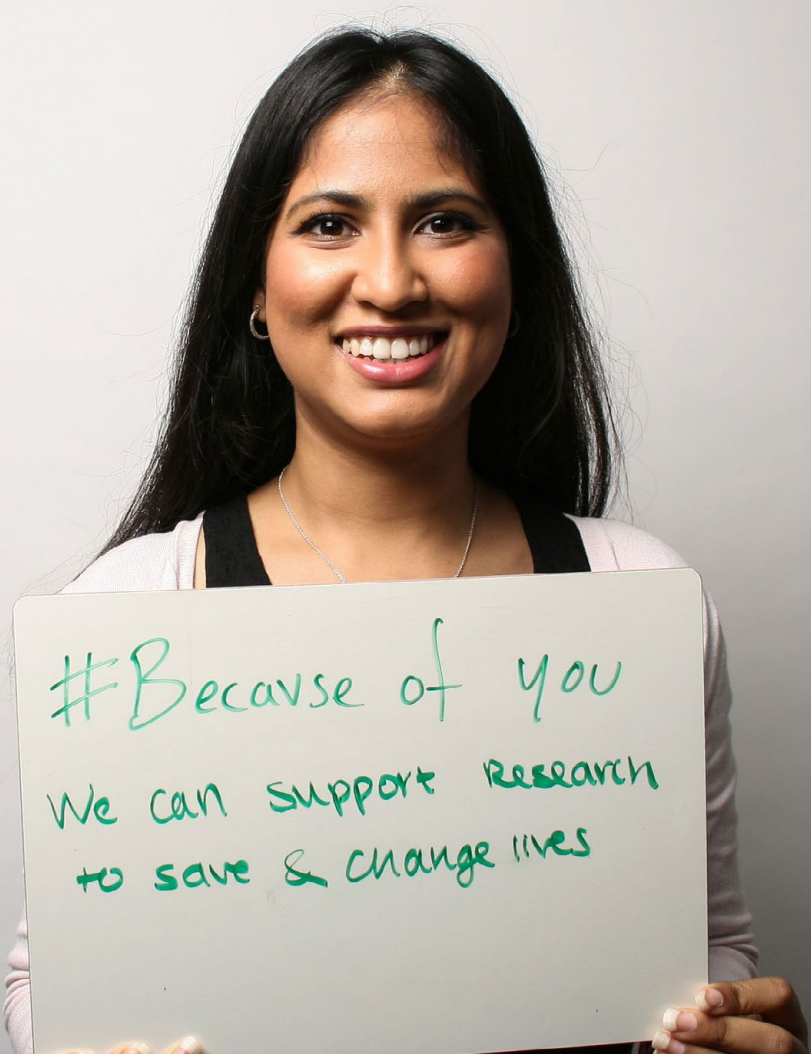
Chief Executive, Sands

## Contents

Reduce babies dying	3
Ensure right care	7
Grow sustainably	13
Raise awareness	19
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1

**To reduce the  
number of babies  
dying before,  
during and shortly  
after birth**

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light pink cardigan over a black top, is smiling and holding a white sign. The sign has handwritten text in green marker.

#Because of you  
We can support research  
to save & change lives

## Research and prevention

**Challenges in a pandemic** We supported over 25 research studies on the impact of COVID-19, including study design, participant recruitment, sourcing and sharing information. We shared parents' voices and made sure their experiences informed policy decisions.

*"Research is one of the only ways we will get answers to why our baby died."*

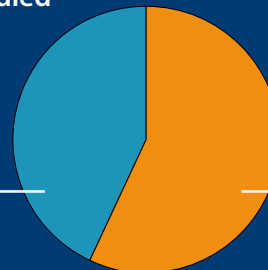
**Priya, Bereaved mother**

**In 2019**

4,829 babies died

**2,066**

neonatal  
deaths



**2,763**

stillbirths

## #BecauseOfYou



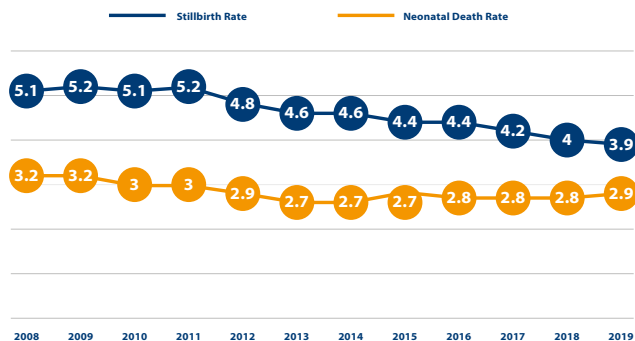
Much of the research we supported has increased understanding of how the pandemic and changes to the health system has impacted expectant and bereaved families. We shared key findings with decision makers to quickly adapt care, where and when needed.



**Tackling inequalities** Babies should not be at higher risk of death simply because of their parents' postcode, ethnicity or income. As part of our continued work to address these disparities, we have introduced Sands Insights Voices – a diverse involvement group – to shape Sands' research, education and policy work.

**Sharing parents' voices** We shared parents' views in national forums and initiatives to address safety in maternity and neonatal care. This directly informs national policy across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### UK stillbirth and neonatal death rates per 1000 live births



*"...it's vital that more is done to find out why babies from minority ethnic and socioeconomically deprived backgrounds are at higher risk of dying before, during, or shortly after birth. Clearly there is a complex mix of risk factors..."*

**Ksavi Joshi, Sands Ambassador**

### Stillbirth rates



**2x**

Black and Black British babies are 2x more likely than white babies



**1.6x**

Asian and Asian British babies are 1.6x more likely than white babies



**1.7x**

The most deprived families are 1.7x more likely than least deprived families



**60%**

Up to **60%** of pregnant women who experience domestic abuse face increased risk of stillbirth and miscarriage

MRRACE-UK Perinatal Mortality Surveillance Report UK Perinatal Deaths for Births from January to December 2019



## Public affairs and campaigns

**Across the UK** Governments agreed to prioritise the re-establishment of maternity safety and bereavement care initiatives. Plus, guidance was issued setting out national standards of care.

**In England** After Sands highlighted the impact of the pandemic on maternity safety initiatives, NHS England established a new Early Warning Safety Surveillance Reporting Group. This group collates, logs and actions national safety concerns during the pandemic.

**In Scotland** The government created a maternity services recovery plan. We also submitted evidence to two select committee enquiries. Partners are now allowed to attend scans and maternity appointments in all Trusts or Boards.

*"Just one family having to go through what we did is too much, and day after day I've read of it happening to so many [...] Keep up your amazing work and the awareness you continue to create. It is vital and a comfort for so many."*

**Bereaved parent**




### #BecauseOfYou



Sands has helped improve the care and support families receive in hospital.

2

To ensure the right care and support is available at the right time after the death of a baby



# because of you  
a family feels heard



**1,393**  
professionals  
trained



**3,415**  
professionals  
supported monthly  
through our Bulletin



**2,043**  
calls answered



**831**  
GriefChat  
conversations



**98%**  
of Trusts in England  
registered interest  
in the NBCP



**3,699**  
emails answered



**93,628**  
Sands Online  
Community visits



**1,700**  
private Facebook  
support group  
members

## Care in a crisis

Sadly, there was a marked increase in demand for support. At times, we saw a 30% month-on-month increase during the pandemic. In the NHS, COVID-19 had an impact on both maternity and bereavement care.

- Families, parents and mothers shared key concerns:
- Fewer appointments
- Virtual appointments
- Attending appointments and scans alone, particularly for those pregnant after loss
- Receiving bad news alone
- PPE affecting staff's ability to give compassionate care

Our work grew in complexity due to a combination of reasons: the circumstances in which baby death occurred; significant pressures on the NHS and staff redeployment; increased isolation; other organisations signposting complex cases to Sands.



The Sands' staff and volunteers delivered exceptional support through the pandemic. Our guidance and expertise continued to be a lifeline for those navigating loss, even during these unprecedented circumstances. We helped to create guidance on compassionate care, supporting NHS staff to ease the impact of the pandemic on families coping with baby loss.

## #BecauseOfYou

**UK maternity units and community services received:**



**2,693**

Memory Boxes



**7,916**

Bereavement  
Support books



**10,179**

Bereavement  
support packs

## Moving Sands support groups online

The pandemic provided opportunities to develop other channels of support, like digital and social media. Providing support online allowed more people to access support meetings enabling those who would find it difficult to travel to or join meetings to do so in peer-led online spaces.

Unsurprisingly, we saw increased demand for online support. We ramped up our presence on the channels where we were most needed: social media (e.g. private Facebook groups), GriefChat, e-mail, our community forum and our app.

When you need to talk to someone, it's comforting to know they've been through it too. Our online community offers invaluable peer-to-peer support.

Sands held virtual and live streamed events, including North East London Sands' Memorial Tree, Cardiff Sands Baby Remembrance Service, Farnborough Sands Wave of Light, Norfolk Sands Bunting (community art project) and Manchester Sands Still Parents Art Workshops.

Even when we can return to face-to-face support, you'll still find us online. Digital support is essential; making it easier for people to access, removing geographical barriers and giving people the chance to access whatever type of support best suits them.

Our Bereavement Support Book is now available in Urdu, Punjabi, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Bengali and Polish.



Our groups and volunteers are integral to how Sands provides its services. We can't thank our volunteers and groups enough for their commitment and enthusiasm for supporting families around the UK.

*"Befriending, to me, is using my pain and grief; turning it into something positive and offering the same support we were offered to others. It helps me make sense of her death and gives it a purpose."*

**Steven Guy, Bereaved father and Northern Ireland Coordinator**



**371**

monthly online local support meetings



**44**

active befrienders



**120**

Black mothers shared their bereavement support experiences (in partnership with Black Mums Upfront)

**#BecauseOfYou**

Sands has embraced innovative ways to reach anyone in need in our support.

## Webinar training success

Launched in May 2020, we delivered *Bereavement in the Workplace* training webinars to UK national organisations.

Our bespoke webinar training for health care professionals soon followed, launching November 2020, delivering 10 tailored bereavement care programmes. Among our 1,393 students were: midwives, doctors, nurses, health visitors, mental health workers, funeral directors, social workers, chaplains, psychologists and schoolteachers.

By moving online, our training was made available to more professionals, beyond hospitals and universities.

We received fantastic feedback from healthcare professionals who attended the training and look forward to growing on this success in years to come.

**100%**

of attendees...



... felt more confident in their ability to provide excellent bereavement care

...would recommend to their colleagues

## National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP)

The NBCP works to improve the quality and consistency of NHS bereavement care offered to all parents following pregnancy loss or the death of a baby. To succeed, Trust cooperation is vital.

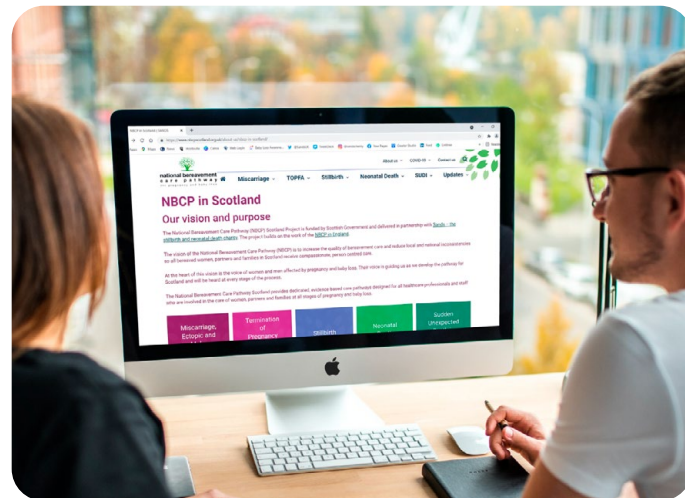
We're excited to have established four NHS Scotland Boards as 'early adopter' sites for the NBCP Scotland programme. We began to produce Scotland-specific guidance for healthcare professionals to support uptake of the pathway.

*"For us the association with Sands is a strong symbol of our belief that parents are central to finding answers about stillbirth and our commitment to growing the role of parents in our future work."*

**Professor Gordon Smith, Head of Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Cambridge, Sands Ambassador**

## Support from Trusts and Foundations

Several Trusts and Foundations helped Sands develop new bereavement support materials for children bereaved of a baby sibling.



### Trusts in England in 20/21

**98%**

interested in signing up to the NBCP

**62%**

fully signed up

**128**

delegates from 75 Trusts attended autumn workshops

### #BecauseOfYou



Our free resource packs help children:

- Explore their feelings and emotions
- Understand the death of their sibling
- Create memories of the baby

3

To grow as one  
strong, sustainable  
and effective  
organisation



## Adapting our strategy

With the cancellation of major fundraising events and activities, Sands faced an unprecedented dual challenge: potential income declining by 40%, demand in services increasing by 30%.

Sands successfully navigated those challenging early months by pivoting our fundraising activities to digital virtual fundraising events and securing crucial COVID-19-related emergency funding.

Our wonderful community rallied to support Sands during this particularly difficult time.

Our virtual fundraising challenges had an incredible response, helping to raise desperately needed funds.

So many Sands supporters told us how taking part in Sands fundraising events benefitted their own mental and physical wellbeing. It was fantastic to see fundraisers join our online fundraising groups to support each other and share advice.



**£2.8 million** raised through remote online fundraising campaigns



**+12,000** supporters joined remote events

*"What I never expected to help me – but really has – was signing up to run 50 Miles in March to raise money. [...] As the donations started coming in and I surpassed my £50 target in only a few hours, I started to believe in myself and my body once more. [...] People sharing their stories helped me to share ours. With the sharing, came more support. It felt amazing keeping Arthur's memory alive, but what felt even better was that each and every step was for him, for us, our family."*

**Leanne Bateson, Bereaved mother**

### Virtual remembrance events

Two important events in the Sands calendar moved online so anyone that wanted to, could still be a part of them.



**Garden Day  
Remembrance  
and Hope**  
June 2020  
**+1,800 viewers**

**Lights of Love**  
December 2020  
**+1,400 viewers**



# Sands United Football Club

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The number of Sands United teams continues to grow, with squads across Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. We welcomed teams from Bury St Edmunds, Derby, Dundee, Guildford, Hereford, Larne and Yeovil.

This year, Sands United joined the *Kick It Out* equality charter to promote inclusivity and diversity in football. Individual teams are doing the same in recognition of the importance of Sands United and Sands' desire to make our places of support both safe and inclusive.

Three Sands United football teams have been recognised by the FA (Football Association) and McDonald's *Grassroots Football Awards* for the difference they make to men affected by the death of a baby.

News in the world of Sands United FC secured amazing media coverage throughout the year, including in a major BBC mental health film with the Duke of Cambridge.

Here are some more highlights across the nation:

## **Sands United Brighton & Hove**

Turned their matches pink and blue during Baby Loss Awareness Week and hosted a fundraising golf day. They also raised an incredible £3,100 during October from challenges, raffles and various sponsored activities.

## **Sands United Salisbury**

Secured a grant of £5,000 for Sands from the Belron Ronnie Lubner Charitable Foundation, to support the Sands' helpline among other areas.

## **Sands United Ashby**

Organised a cycling challenge and took part in Challenge14. This featured a range of activities – from baby hat knitting and fundraising hampers to food bank donations.

## **Sands United Stockport**

Team Manager Joel Kelly raised an incredible £930 through a 24-hour Fortnite game stream.

## **Sands United Cardiff**

Stephen Doran continued his remarkable Miles in Memory challenge. As well as raising awareness, Stephen dedicated each run to the memory of one lost baby, carrying their name across his chest.

## Keeping spirits high

Football was among the many activities impacted by the pandemic. We supported more than 30 teams through the restrictions and set up a Facebook group to help bereaved men stay connected through those challenging times. Teams responded to the challenge, bringing in new risk assessments and making sure sessions could continue in some form. April's *Toilet Roll Trick Shot Challenge*, started by Sands United FC's official kit supplier MDH, brought a smile to everyone's faces.

Many teams embraced The 2.6 Challenge set up by the London Marathon. There was cycling, running and burpees and the Sands United teams raised over £5,000 between them.

Thank you and congratulations to all our Sands United FC stars. Lost lives are honoured and grieving parents, especially dads, can know they are not alone.



Image Courtesy of Mark Lockie

# Our finances

Most of the fundraising that would take place in a normal year became impossible in 2020/21, but Sands adapted quickly. With the support of thousands of fundraisers together with emergency COVID-19 funding, we raised almost £6.4m, the largest amount ever received during Sands' history. Of the entire income, 87% was received as direct donations direct or via fundraising activities and 13% was made up of grant income from Trusts and government sources...

## How we achieved this



**Extraordinarily successful digital fundraising activity** Early adoption of new approaches to digital fundraising enabled us to connect supporters to innovative ways of supporting Sands.



**A record-breaking corporate fundraising performance** Sands benefitted from the most successful year to date for corporate partner support. We successfully partnered with 25 valuable new partners, including household names Marks & Spencer and NatWest Group.



**Exceptional Trusts, Foundations and Statutory Fundraising** An unprecedented 349 applications were submitted to Trusts and government funding sources resulting in Sands being awarded more than £800k to help us meet the increase in demand and continue our vital work.

**£983,000**

spent on fundraising activities

That's

**15p**

in every pound received

For every £1 we spent on generating funds we raised an average of £6.48

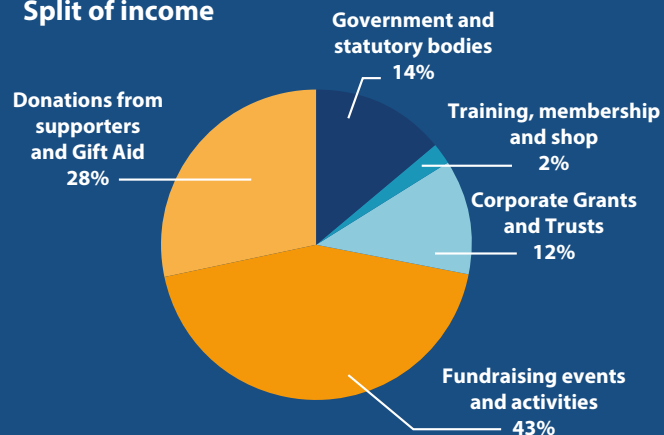
We kept key services running throughout the year, spending £2.6m on our vital work to save babies' lives and support bereaved families.

£983,000 was spent on fundraising activities – that's 15p in every pound received. For every £1 we spent on generating funds we raised an average of £6.48. This ground-breaking level of income also provided Sands with the financial resilience to maintain and build our activities, and further increase our impact through to 2022.

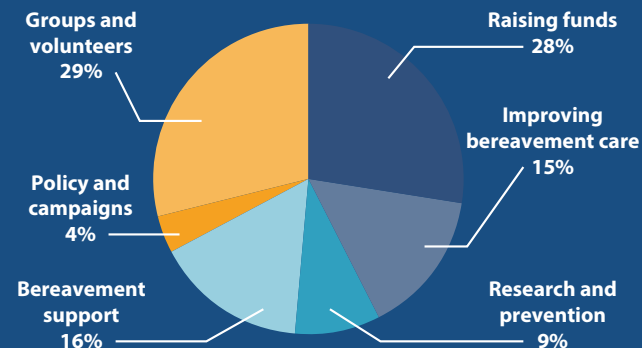
*"We want to enable our incredible supporters across the UK to volunteer in ways which work for them and have the most impact in their community."*

**Jen Coates, Director of Volunteering and Bereavement Support**

### Split of income

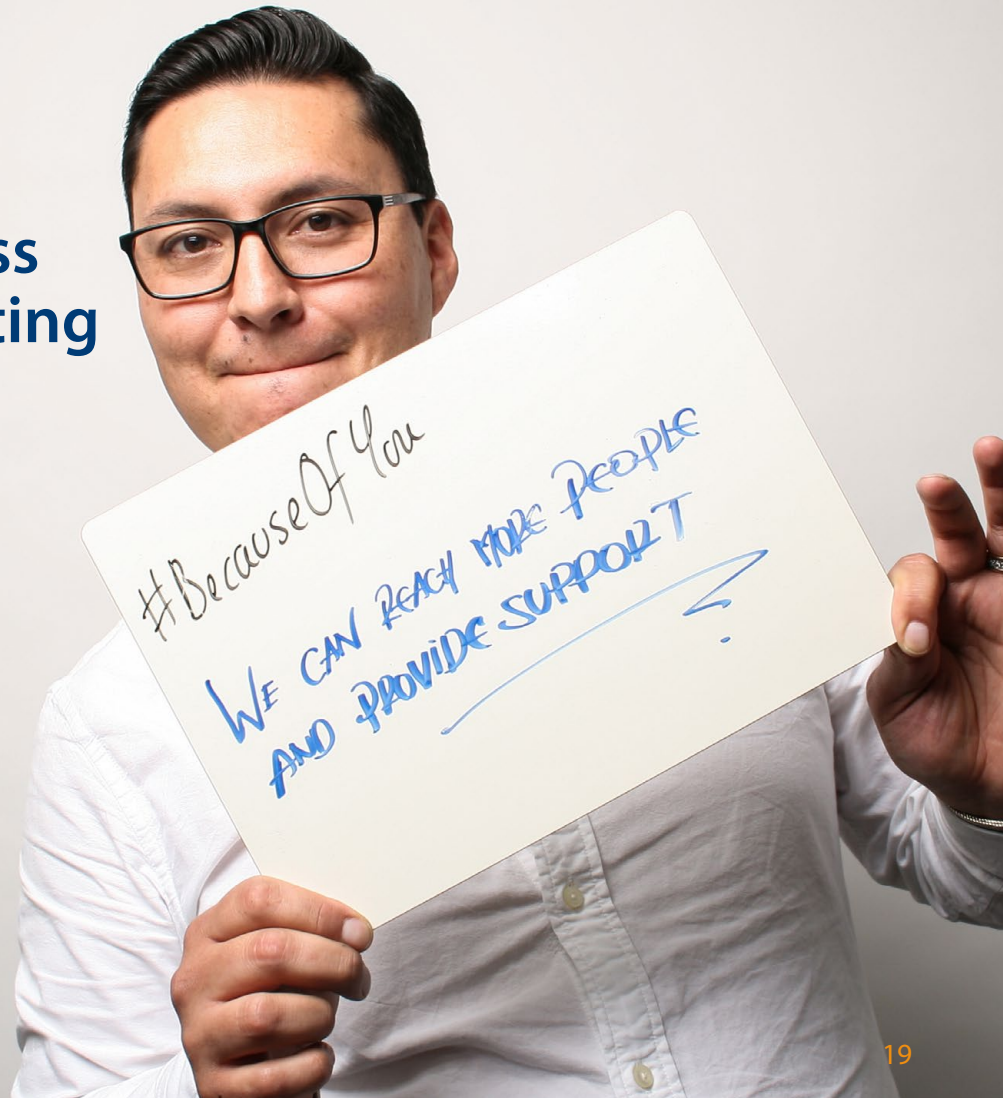


### Split of expenditure



4

To raise awareness  
of the issues relating  
to stillbirth and  
neonatal death



This year was a constant flow of national news stories – we knew our message had to successfully cut through, to reach the public stage. And so, our focus addressed the most pertinent issues identified by both parents and professionals:

- Sands Awareness Month 2020 *Finding the Words* focused on supporting the NHS so they could be there for families.
- Baby Loss Awareness Week 2020 *You are Not Alone* focused on access to maternity appointments and scans.

In doing so, our messages resonated with the public's concerns. We generated unprecedented media coverage for our campaigns, helped raise vital awareness and encouraged thousands of people to act.

Bereaved parent Nicky Whelan spoke to *Sky News* about being a Sands bereavement support worker.

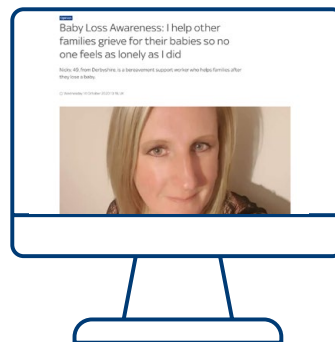
Two-year-old Daisy Adams' bike ride for Sands in memory of her sister featured in *The Mirror* and *ITV*.

Our support for The Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle's speaking out about her miscarriage was featured widely in media coverage including *The Independent* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

## Being a go-to source

Amidst ever changing regulations and growing fear, it was critical our website delivered reliable, clear, and up-to-date information for pregnant women.

Adding COVID-19 news to the Safer Pregnancy website and sharing via third parties resulted in a 95% increase in traffic to the site, with 945,915 homepage views.



*"We want to enable our incredible supporters across the UK to volunteer in ways which work for them and have the most impact in their community."*

**Jen Coates, Director of Volunteering and Bereavement Support**



## Social media success

We've seen a significant year-on-year increase across all our social media channels.

We used social media to proactively offer our support to high profile parents who had spoken about the loss of their pregnancy or the death of their baby. This included: Chrissy Teigen and John Legend, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Danny Cipriani and Victoria Rose, Kirsty Leigh-Porter. Sands was mentioned as a source of support in *Metro* (1.4m daily circulation), *The Sun* (1.2m), and *The Mail Online* (34m unique monthly users).



**Facebook**  
**106k likes**  
(+7.82%)



**LinkedIn**  
**2,583 followers**



**Twitter**  
**20k followers**  
(+9.96%)



**Instagram**  
**22k followers**  
(+63.36%)

## Reaching new audiences

As well as raising awareness of stillbirth and neonatal death, we need to make our work known as a charity. We reached more men through our online spaces, providing them with support and care.

Collaborating with Dope Black Mums, Dope Black Dads, Black Mums Upfront, and The Motherhood Group help us raise awareness of Sands and its work within these communities, too. Plus, they help us better understand the needs of the Black community.

*"People often ask 'how is your wife'. That is nice and I am glad they want to talk but many dads and partners have whole conversations where their grief isn't also acknowledged. I'm so glad Sands has ways Dad's and partners can support each other and express their feelings."*

**Peter Byrom, Bereaved father and Sands United Welfare Officer**

## Baby Loss Awareness Week

Led by Sands, Baby Loss Awareness Week continues to be a beacon of collaboration. All charities shared one united theme: *#YouAreNotAlone*. The week highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on bereaved parents and families, specifically the exclusion of partners from pregnancy, maternity and neonatal services.

Nearly 5,000 emails urged MPs, MSPs, MSs and MLAs to contact their local health trust or board on behalf of all excluded partners. Every MP in England was contacted by at least one (nearly always more) of their constituents. The result? Nearly 275 responses from Trusts and Boards.

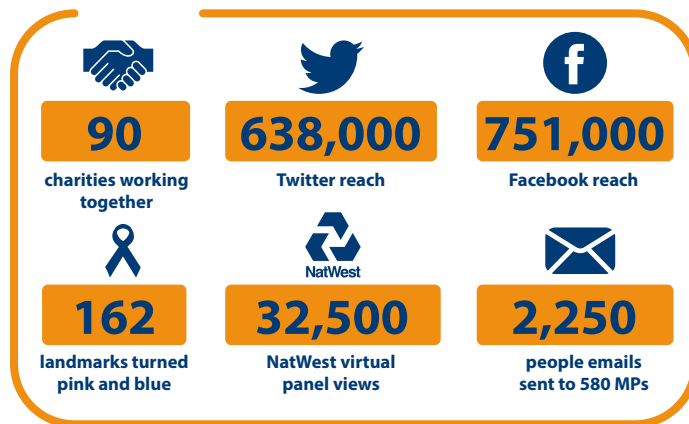
Much of our activity focussed on what we could do from home. From family homes to national landmarks, buildings across the UK turned pink and blue. Our Facebook and Twitter activity saw significant growth compared to the previous year. And supporters brought the week's theme to their local leaders' attention.

On social, our Facebook and Twitter reach were both significantly greater than the year before. Plus, the NatWest (sponsoring the week in partnership with Sands) daily virtual panel discussions reached nearly 33,000 views.

## Stop the press

**"MORE THAN HALF OF BRITISH POPULATION MAY HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY PREGNANCY AND BABY LOSS"**

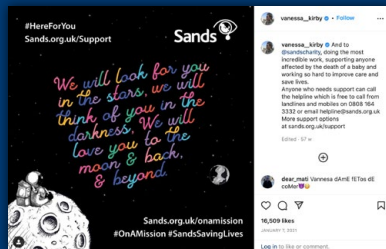
This striking YouGov result launched Baby Loss Awareness Week 2020. The significant statistic featured in 27 articles and interviews. That's more national coverage than *any* previous year.



## Supporter highlights



**Nana-Adwoa Mboutcha, Dope Black Mums co-founder.** *The Independent* (monthly audience of 26m online) and *Stylist* (monthly audience of 1m online) shared Nana-Adwoa's story.



**Vanessa Kirby, *Pieces of a Woman* actor.** We offered support to anyone affected by the film, which portrayed a mother's experience of neonatal death.

## Ambassador news



**Genelle Aldred, journalist.** In support of Baby Loss Awareness Week, Genelle gave an interview for the *BBC* and told her story in *Women's Health* magazine following the death of Chrissy Teigen's baby son Jack.

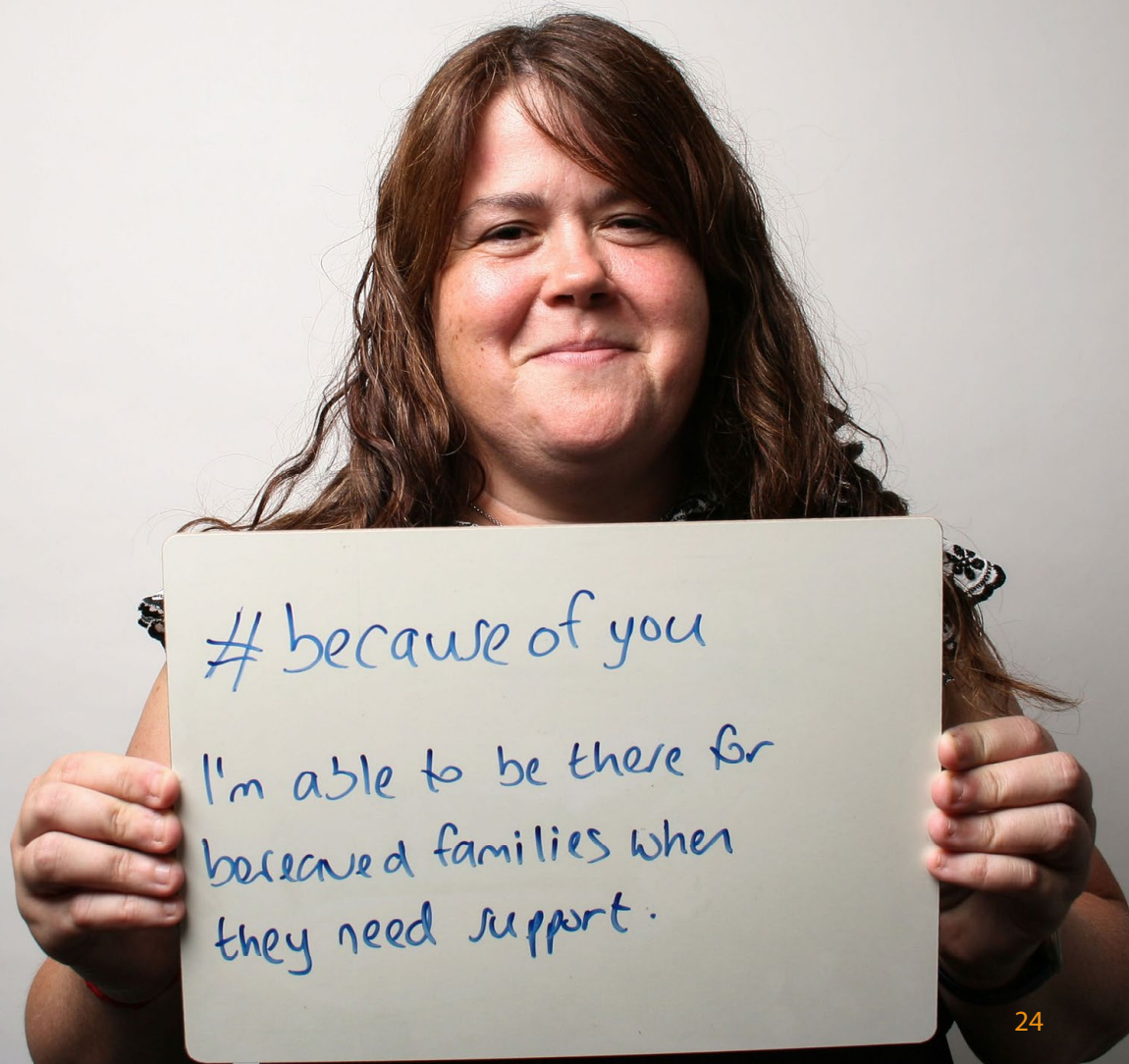


**Ksavi Joshi, make-up artist and life coach.** Ksavi has helped to break the silence around pregnancy and baby loss in the UK South Asian community by talking about her grief after the unexpected death of her second son Shivai in 2015, when he was almost eight months old.



**Professor Gordon Smith, Head of Cambridge University's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.** Gordon's internationally-recognised research looks for better ways to predict problems in pregnancy, so babies and mothers get the care they need.

# Lessons learned



# Lessons learned

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## Research and Prevention

It's a lesson we've always known, but this year showed how important it is for us to keep amplifying parents' voices. It is vital for families' experiences to be included in national discussions. We will continue to make sure parents' views are shared and considered in decision making and policy development.



## Improving Bereavement Care

Collaboration is key to our work – as one of our values – and felt critical to our success this year. Each bereavement care service depends on the other; to be there for those in need, to do our jobs, to signpost at the right time. In a year when specialist services and NHS medical care was under immense strain, working as one united front helped more families in need.



## Bereavement Support Services

What once was 'restrictive', now presents possibilities. Campaigning and supporting from home has shown us that we must continue to take up opportunities online. We've seen how many more audiences we can reach by offering support services online, and how appreciated peer-led spaces are. We're excited to see where this lesson takes us next.



## Income and Engagement

Innovation is key. When we adapt, we grow. Our extraordinary success adapting our fundraising and engagement to digital has helped set up a strong future. We've worked hard to maintain diverse income streams, and successfully cultivated new sponsors and partnerships. We continue to put our supporters at the heart of our fundraising.

## Thank you

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**to all the parents, professionals, government departments, parliamentarians, researchers, Royal Colleges and other organisations. Your invaluable support and advice drove our important work over the last year.**

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ABM UK  
Allen & Overy LLP  
Altrincham Crematorium  
Aspect Capital Limited  
Asset Finance Solutions (UK) Ltd  
Aztec Group  
Banbury Crematorium  
BDO UK LLP  
Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation  
Berkshire Community Foundation  
Bhavik Haria  
Black Mums up Front  
Breckland Crematorium  
Bushbury Crematorium  
Cambridgeshire Community Foundation  
Carrie Elizabeth Ltd  
Challinors Solicitors  
Chanterlands Crematorium  
Chapter Lodge No. 4677

Close Brothers Ltd  
Codemasters  
Community Foundation for Surrey  
Crane Payment Innovations  
Direct Line Group  
Doris Field Charitable Trust  
Dyke Yaxley Ltd  
First2Protect Limited  
Fort Vale Foundation  
Fragomen LLP  
Freshfields  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Great Grimsby Crematorium  
Guru Technology Ltd  
Holmesdale Chapter Freemasons  
HSBC Bank plc  
Humble Bundle  
Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management  
Invesco Perpetual  
Isio Group Ltd

James Inglis Testamentary Trust  
Keenan Wealth Management  
Kensington Mortgages Limited  
Kingsdown Crematorium  
Lodge of Integrity No. 4563 Benevolent Fund  
Lodge of Stability 217  
London Community Response Fund  
London Resilience Fund (City Bridge Trust)  
Louis Nicholas Residuary Charitable Trust  
Marks and Spencer  
Marks and Spencer Glasgow  
MBRRACE-UK  
Milton Keynes Community Foundation  
Mothership Writers  
National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit  
NatWest Group  
Nursing and Midwifery Council  
One Community  
Orbis Investments  
P F Charitable Trust  
Partnering Health Limited



## Thank you

PBCI Belfast  
Pertemps  
Pilkington Charities Fund  
Robert Priestley Charitable Trust  
Royal College of Midwives  
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists  
Sandra Charitable Trust  
Sea Meadow Trust  
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust  
Solace Jewellery  
Somerset Community Foundation  
St John's Lodge No 90  
St John's, Groombridge  
Suffolk Community Foundation  
The Alchemy Foundation  
The Annett Trust  
The Basil Death Trust  
The Belron Ronnie Lubner Charitable Foundation  
The Chandris Foundation  
The Charity of Stella Symons  
The Childwick Trust  
The Christadelphian Samaritan Fund  
The Community of the Presentation Trust  
The D'Oly Carte Charitable Trust  
The DLA Piper Charitable Trust  
The Eveson Charitable Trust

The Exeter Chiefs Foundation  
The Fulmer Charitable Trust  
The Hasluck Charitable Trust  
The Helianthus Charitable Trust  
The Hemraj Goyal Foundation  
The Irving Memorial Trust  
The J P Jacobs Charitable Trust  
The John Pryor Charitable Trust  
The Joshi family  
The Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust  
The May Gibson Charitable Trust  
The Motherhood Group  
The National Lottery Community Fund  
The Oakdale Trust  
The Rainford Trust  
The Red Arrows Trust  
The Rose Adeane Trust  
The Scrope Charitable Trust  
The Shanly Foundation  
The Sir James Reckitt Charity  
The Souter Charitable Trust  
The Thomas Farr Charity  
The Vishaal Foundation  
The Wixamtree Trust  
TJX UK Foundation  
West Suffolk Crematorium  
Winning Moves UK Ltd





**If you need support:**

Call our helpline on 0808 164 3332  
Email [Helpline@Sands.org.uk](mailto:Helpline@Sands.org.uk)

Find your local support group  
Join our online community  
Download our app

[sands.org.uk](https://sands.org.uk)