




Our Strategy: 2022 - 2025


Saving babies' lives.
Supporting bereaved families.







Sands' vision is of a world where fewer babies die and, when a baby does die, anyone affected receives the best possible care and support for as long as they need.



We couldn't have created this strategy on our own. We spoke to many people: bereaved families, supporters, volunteers, and anyone who has a stake in what Sands is trying to achieve – to decide how we can build on what we've already achieved, and what to do next.

Our core aims



**Babies' lives
are saved**



**Anyone affected
by the death of a
baby receives the
care and support
they need**

Vision

A world where fewer babies die and, when a baby does die, anyone affected receives the best possible care and support for as long as they need

Mission

We work to save babies' lives and to improve care and support for anyone affected by the death of a baby

Core aims

1. Babies' lives are saved
2. Anyone affected by the death of a baby receives the care and support they need

Strategic objective 1

To be a welcoming, supportive community which is inclusive, accessible, and known to all

Strategic objective 2

To save babies' lives and ensure inequalities in pregnancy loss and baby death are reduced

Strategic objective 3

To ensure everyone has equal access to the excellent bereavement care and support after pregnancy loss and baby death

Strategic objective 4

To grow and develop sustainably to have impact now and in the future

Values

We will be compassionate, collaborative, evidence-based and inclusive

By 2025, the outcomes we want to see are:

1

The UK being on track to reduce stillbirths and neonatal deaths by 50%.

2

The Bereavement Support we offer demonstrably meeting the diverse needs of bereaved parents and families.

3

The National Bereavement Care Pathway embedded across England and Scotland, and Bereavement Care Pathways to have been introduced in Wales and Northern Ireland.

4

The population of the UK are aware of the extent of baby loss, and of Sands and what we offer.

Our strategy to achieve this impact and these outcomes is:

1

To be a welcoming, supportive community which is inclusive, accessible, and known to all by...

- Giving an equitable welcome to all
- Actively finding and bringing people to Sands
- Taking a person-centred approach
- Working effectively at a local and national level across all four nations
- Raising awareness about pregnancy loss and baby death, and about Sands

2

To save babies' lives and ensure inequalities in pregnancy loss and baby deaths are reduced by...

- Understanding why babies die and developing new knowledge to save babies' lives
- Improving safety in pregnancy, birth, and the neonatal period
- Reducing inequalities in perinatal mortality
- Being as well known for saving babies' lives as we are for bereavement support and care

3

To ensure everyone has equal access to excellent bereavement care and support after pregnancy loss and baby death by...

- Ensuring Sands provides appropriate and person-centred support of the highest quality
- Ensuring excellent and equal bereavement care is offered by everyone, particularly within healthcare settings and the workplace
- Being a centre of excellence; creating educational and learning resources to equip professionals and volunteers with the skills and knowledge they need
- Campaigning for excellent bereavement care and support, and building a committed and engaged supporter base

4

To grow and develop sustainably to have impact now and in the future by...

- Being trusted and respected as the UK's baby loss charity / or being the 'go-to' baby loss charity
- Ensuring income grows sustainably
- Ensuring that as it grows, Sands is known for the impact it makes, for its integrity, and for its willingness to learn and continually improve
- Supporting the sustainable growth of the charity with appropriate capacity, infrastructure, and resources

Detail of strategic objectives





1

To be a welcoming, supportive community which is inclusive, accessible, and known to all

Image Courtesy of Mark Lockie

Strategic objectives

1.1 Giving an equitable welcome to all

We will do this by:

- Increasing accessibility so that all who need Sands feel welcome
- Welcoming and including those affected by all types of pregnancy loss and baby death, and those who are not bereaved
- Building a welcoming community where everyone feels valued and equal however they engage with Sands and whatever their relationship to Sands
- Creating a culture where Sands 'looks up and out, not down and in'



"Helping someone else feel less alone, just as befrienders did for us, and still do."

Emma Hayward, Sands Befriender

Strategic objectives

1.2 Actively finding and bringing people to Sands

We will do this by:

- Reaching out to all bereaved parents and families with an active and appropriate offer of support or involvement
- Proactively working with community and special interest groups to understand specific needs and to respond appropriately to these
- Creating spaces within Sands that we can authentically bring people into



"...externally we're making a difference and changing the outlook on mental health and baby loss. I hope this (Award) shows that people who have not been affected by the death of a baby know Sands United is here and we can support more people in the area."

Craig Pivey, Sands United Hull and East Yorkshire

1.3 Taking a person-centred approach

We will do this by:

- Focusing on understanding and meeting people's needs
- Building a supporter journey that allows people to get what they need from being involved with Sands and which changes over time with the person's needs
- Developing volunteering opportunities within Sands which provide real choice and help Sands to achieve its vision and mission



"When I lost my babies, Sands Shrewsbury came through for me, organised the funerals, their plots and gave me the emotional and grief support I needed. Doing this challenge will mean a lot to give back."

Amy Dyght, Bereaved Mother

Strategic objectives

1.4

Working effectively at a local and national level across all four nations

We will do this by:

- Identifying and developing what Sands can do most effectively at a local level and what Sands can do most effectively at a national level
- Building a strong local presence across the UK
- Developing both a 4-nation strategy and country-specific strategies for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland which meet individual country's needs and support the growth of Sands as a single organisation



Strategic objectives

1.5

Raising awareness about pregnancy loss and baby death, and about Sands

We will do this by:

- Highlighting the scale of pregnancy loss and baby death and its impact
- Communicating clearly about the work that Sands does in relation to pregnancy loss and baby death, and about the impact that we have
- Breaking the silence and reducing the stigma and isolation associated with pregnancy loss and baby death
- Building a powerful, accessible, and relevant brand



"The worst thing to do is pretend nothing happened... the fact you're talking to me about him is such a comfort. Don't worry if you say something wrong. That's better than nothing at all."

Richard, Bereaved Father on Facebook



2

BBC NEWS

Baby death rates

Asian and black babies at higher risk of stillborn or neonatal death

17:43

To save babies' lives and ensure inequalities in pregnancy loss and baby death are reduced

Strategic objectives

2.1

Understanding why babies die and developing new knowledge to save babies' lives

We will do this by:

- Supporting research projects that will make the biggest difference to saving babies' lives
- Supporting bereaved parents to inform and shape research
- Working with others to create collaborations of research excellence
- Increasing the profile and funding of all perinatal mortality research
- Ensuring real learning occurs after the death of every baby and that this informs future practice



"Research is vital to finding new ways to reduce baby deaths. Sands' commitment to strengthening UK perinatal research will directly lead to new discoveries and better care for women and their families."

Dr Sarah Stock, University of Edinburgh, Sands Trustee

Strategic objectives

2.2

Improving safety in pregnancy, birth, and the neonatal period



We will do this by:

- Campaigning to drive improvements, developing policy solutions, working to keep safe care on national agendas and holding governments to account
- Supporting the development and implementation of systems and cultures which promote safe care, and which use data and knowledge in an effective and timely manner
- Turning research evidence around safety into education, training and learning resources for clinicians and working in partnership with others to improve care
- Raising awareness of safer and healthier pregnancy issues
- Providing information on safer pregnancy and maternity care for parents and pregnant people

"Sands training for healthcare professionals has proved invaluable to me not just professionally but personally helping those around me."

Jodie, Midwife

2.3 Reducing inequalities in perinatal mortality

We will do this by:

- Building a better understanding of why inequalities in outcome exist for pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, birth, the neonatal period and what can be done to address them
- Campaigning to drive improvements which will reduce inequalities, including a target to reduce inequalities in outcomes
- Ensuring that the diverse voices of bereaved parents from groups who have higher risk factors are listened to and improve care



"...it's vital that more is done to find out why babies from minority ethnic and socio-economically 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

Strategic objectives

2.4

Being as well known for saving babies' lives
as we are for bereavement support and care



We will do this by:

- Raising awareness of and celebrating what Sands has already achieved by contributing towards the reduction in perinatal mortality, and the impact that Sands continues to have in this area
- Investing resources, capacity, and time to ensure more babies' lives can be saved
- Amplifying the voice of bereaved parents

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

Priya, Bereaved Mother



3

To ensure everyone has equal access to excellent bereavement care and support after pregnancy loss and baby death

Strategic objectives

3.1

Ensuring Sands provides appropriate and person-centred support of the highest quality



We will do this by:

- Combining innovation, creativity, and skill to develop new channels of support which allow people to access support in the way that they would choose
- Building resources, capability, and capacity to meet the needs of all those who reach out to Sands for support, working in partnership to extend our reach where appropriate
- Introducing counselling to enhance bereavement support where appropriate
- Developing a proactive approach to offering support
- Effectively using quality assurance to ensure support is evidence-based and of the highest quality
- Continuing to develop a model of bereavement support based on growth and hope
- Reducing inequality of access to Sands' bereavement support across the UK

"I really don't want to think where I'd be had I not had your patience, kindness and support and this safe place to express my thought and feeling... thank you... you have turned my life around, I'm in such a better place now."

Bereaved parent

Strategic objectives

3.2

Ensuring excellent and equal bereavement care is offered by everyone, particularly within healthcare settings and the workplace



We will do this by:

- Embedding and monitoring uptake of the NBCP in all Trusts and Health Boards so that excellent bereavement care becomes a standard expectation
- Reducing inequality of bereavement care across the UK, ensuring that individual needs are met
- Raising awareness of the importance of bereavement care within the workplace and building an expectation with employers that they will offer excellent care
- Using research to improve bereavement care
- Developing a strong local presence across the UK which allows Sands to support excellent bereavement care for all

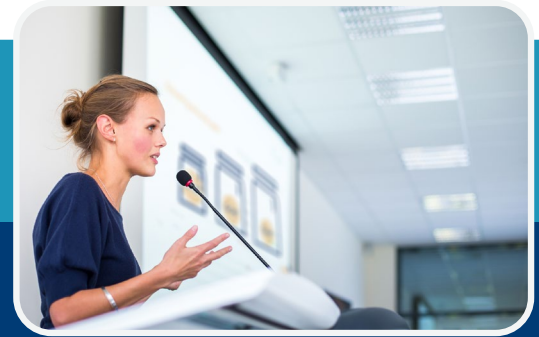
"Thanks so much for running this (workplace) training for us. I've found it really useful from the perspective of how HR can support line managers as well as employees, as well as of course how I can support colleagues myself"

HR Manager at a national bank

Strategic objectives

3.3

Being a centre of excellence; creating educational and learning resources to equip professionals and volunteers with the skills and knowledge they need



We will do this by:

- Providing thought leadership in developing an expanded range of evidence-based training and resources to improve the care and support offered and which is accessible to all
- Offering quality assured training and education that is recognised as being excellent
- Embedding bereavement care training and resources for healthcare professionals in both initial education and then ongoing development, enabling others to provide quality assured care
- Developing a range of approaches enabling appropriate training to reach all those who need it

"As a bereavement midwife, I am privileged to help and support families during the darkest days of their lives. Sands, the stillbirth & neonatal death charity are an amazing charity and help me so much in my role to help me do my job to the best I possibly can!..."

Toni Newlove, Bereavement Midwife

Strategic objectives

3.4

Campaigning for excellent bereavement care and support, and building a committed and engaged supporter base



We will do this by:

- Campaigning to ensure that statutory entitlements reflect the needs of bereaved parents
- Campaigning to ensure that excellent bereavement care and support is seen as an entitlement rather than a 'nice to have'
- Developing effective local and national campaigns for excellent care and support which involve and inspire volunteers and supporters
- Raising awareness of the importance of everyone feeling able to offer care and support to bereaved families

"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



4

To grow and develop sustainably to
have impact now and in the future

Strategic objectives

4.1 Being trusted and respected as the UK's 'go-to' baby loss charity



We will do this by:

- Ensuring Sands' work and brand is widely known and associated with excellence in all that we do
- Providing thought leadership within the sector and being the 'go to charity' for saving babies' lives and bereavement care and support
- Developing Baby Loss Awareness Week to effectively raise awareness, enable commemoration, and drive improvement in support, care, and mortality rates
- Working collaboratively with others in the sector, developing relationships and beneficial ways of working
- Growing our reach, size, and capability to match the scale of pregnancy loss and baby death

"For more than 40 years Sands has been achieving incredible things by supporting bereaved parents and families and leading research to save babies' lives ...We're proud to have the opportunity to support Sands and look forward to doing what we can to help in their mission."

Zoe Poulton, Head of Marketing, Oprema Ltd

4.2 Ensuring income grows sustainably

We will do this by:

- Developing long term, sustainable and predictable income streams which include committed giving, challenge events, institutional funding, legacies, and major supporters
- Growing trading income through increased merchandising activity
- Optimising opportunities to support Sands digitally
- Striving for a world class supporter experience
- Building a strong community fundraising base across the UK



"Sadly, we have seen firsthand the amazing work Sands does for grieving parents, which is why I am so proud to now fundraise for Sands."

Terence Smith, Bereaved Father

Strategic objectives

4.3

Ensuring that as it grows, Sands is known for the impact it makes, for its integrity, and for its willingness to learn and continually improve



We will do this by:

- Prioritising the ability to identify and demonstrate outcome and impact for all areas of Sands' work and developing appropriate and innovative ways to share our impact with different audiences
- Ensuring Sands' values are at the heart of all that Sands does, driving behaviour and decisions and supporting a person-centred and empathetic culture in which everyone is respected and valued
- Striving to always do the right thing rather than the easy thing, whether that is for beneficiaries, supporters, or staff
- Continuing to grow as a Learning Organisation, supporting innovative thought and a drive for continual improvement

"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

Strategic objectives

4.4

Supporting the sustainable growth of the charity with appropriate capacity, infrastructure, and resources

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that appropriate IT systems are in place which support the realisation of Sands' core aims
- Ensuring Sands has the right staff with the right skills who are supported to do the right thing
- Developing volunteering at Sands to provide a positive and rewarding experience, and to help achieve Sands' core aims
- Embedding a holistic approach to diversity, inclusion, and equity across all that Sands does
- Taking an environmentally sustainable approach to all aspects of Sands' work



"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

