



Sands' support for hospitals

Our mission

Since 1978, Sands has been there for anyone affected by the death of a baby. This means mothers, partners, family, friends and healthcare professionals too. Our core aims are to:



Reduce the rate of preventable baby deaths



Provide bereavement support for bereaved families devastated by the loss of a baby



To help healthcare professionals provide the best possible bereavement care.

Sands engages with healthcare professionals in our joint efforts in a number of ways:



Bulletin for professionals

We send regular emails to healthcare professionals working directly with families when a baby dies, and those with an interest in research, education, or policy in the field. These include updates from Sands and useful information from other organisations. See previous issues and sign up [here](#).



Bereavement support helpline and online services

Our bereavement support team is here for anyone affected by the death of a baby, including healthcare professionals and can be contacted by telephone, email and social media. Find out about how to access our support services [here](#).



Memory boxes

Our free memory boxes are a fundamental evidence-based tool for professionals to deliver good bereavement care. They help families to establish a positive connection with their babies and start forging a parental bond that will endure after saying goodbye. Read more about Sands memory boxes and order them free of charge [here](#).



Bereavement support app

Our app aims to help bereaved parents and families to find the right information and support at the right time. [The app](#) can also be used by healthcare professionals, who would like to know how best to support bereaved parents and their families.



Bereavement support book

Designed to guide families through this most difficult of times, our [bereavement support book](#) is available to download free and is also a useful reference for professionals. A number of translations are also available from the same web page, with more being added over the coming months.



Local Sands groups

Our groups are not meeting person at present, due to the restrictions around COVID-19, but many are holding virtual meetings and still available for professionals to refer families on to. Find how to refer bereaved families to your local group [here](#).



Online Support Meetings

Along with online support delivered by local Groups, Sands hosts a monthly online meeting run by befrienders and Sands staff for anyone wishing to join remotely. Dates are advertised on social media and registration is required via the Sands Facebook Support Group.



Bereavement care training and consultancy services

We provide training which focuses on how best to support parents and families when a baby dies with the voice of bereaved parents and needs of professionals at the centre. Suitable for anyone working in maternity services or neonatal care, including students, you can book your place on the webinars [here](#). We also offer [consultancy services](#) to help organisations develop and implement best practice to ensure parents receive the support when they need it most.



National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP) for pregnancy loss and the death of a baby

We lead on the development of the NBCP along with our partners. The NBCP is designed to ensure that all bereaved families have access to high quality, sensitive and family centred care, regardless of circumstance, gestation or postcode. Trusts signing up to the NBCP commit to working towards nine bereavement care [standards](#). Signing up to the NBCP is completely free of charge.

NBCP e-learning materials

We have created two e-learning [modules](#) with our partners in the NBCP collaboration. The first is a short and basic introduction to bereavement care, for anyone in touch with bereaved parents and families, whether professionals, friends, neighbours or colleagues. The second is more in-depth and available for healthcare professionals working with recently bereaved families.

We have helped to create learning resources for the five care pathways which are available on both the [England](#) and [Scotland](#) websites. For example, NBCP Scotland signposts videos, e-learning, guidance and advice within downloadable documents and web pages for staff working with women and their partners on [Miscarriage](#) and [Stillbirth](#).

Giving parents answers and learning from deaths

Parents' input into the review of their baby's death is vital to ensure their questions are answered and as much as possible can be learned from the death. Their perspective of all aspects of their care can add to the clinical record, and improve care for future parents, but it can feel daunting for healthcare professionals to approach distressed parents.

Our resources help with getting the communication right

[Click here](#)

We have specifically supported a pathway to parent engagement in hospital review for the Perinatal Mortality Review Tool (PMRT)

[Available here](#)

We also offer webinar training for healthcare professionals

to develop the skills and knowledge they need to support parents through engaging in a review process, at a time of great distress. Our training which will be available soon, looks at the PMRT pathway and support materials, and outlines principles for family engagement in all reviews/investigations.

[Click here](#)

COVID-19 and pregnancy

We collate official information for healthcare professionals in one place. In response to the number of people contacting us with concerns about coronavirus and pregnancy we pulled together information and guidance for pregnant women and their families onto one [here](#). The information covers what to do to keep safe, including the importance of continuing to report reduced fetal movements and attend assessments as set out in Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and Royal College of Midwives (RCM) [guidance](#).

Pregnancy after loss during the pandemic

We create dedicated web pages and resources to support women and families. We know that women who are pregnant after a stillbirth or death of a newborn baby are already likely to be feeling anxious [here](#).

Bereavement care guidance for professionals

Sands fully supports the NHS and its dedicated staff. We understand the impact the pandemic is having and work with the RCM to update clinical guidance on bereavement care in Maternity. In response to feedback on experiences during the pandemic we received, this now includes an additional section outlining essential aspects of bereavement care. Download the guidance [here](#).

We have added new resources on sensitive and effective communication and communication in PPE to our website [here](#).