

Sands
Application Information

**Head of Bereavement Support
Services & Counselling**

March 2026

About Sands

Sands exists to save babies' lives and ensure that anyone affected by pregnancy loss or baby death receives the support and care they need.

We provide bereavement support services both nationally through our Freephone helpline, 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.

Working in partnership with professionals, trusts and health boards, we offer 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.

Additionally, we promote improvements in practice and support research to better understand the causes of deaths and save babies' lives.

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

Over the past 46 years, Sands has grown into a national charity with a powerful vision shared by dedicated volunteers, fundraisers, members, donors, healthcare professionals, partners, staff and bereaved parents and families.

Sands has grown its income by 40% since 2012 and, as part of our strategic plan, is focusing on how we can make the biggest difference to the lives of bereaved families and save babies' lives. To find out more, visit www.sands.org.uk

Our vision at Sands is for a world where fewer babies die and anyone affected by the death of a baby receives the best care and support for as long as they need, wherever they live in the UK.

Join us and help create a world where fewer babies die.

Sands 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 Services

As part of its commitment to employee wellbeing, Sands offers all Staff access to the Bupa employee Assistance service which offers free and confidential counselling and wellbeing support. Support is available on a range of issues including legal, financial, emotional, health, and work-related concerns.

Sand 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.

Sands Pension Scheme

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

Life Insurance

All Staff are covered by a Life Insurance Policy which pays 3 x annual salary to nominated beneficiaries. Staff also have access to Canada Life's WeCare wellbeing platform including 24/7 online GP, mental health counselling and financial and legal support. Additionally Staff have access to Bereavement Counselling and a Probate Helpline.

Flexible Working

All Staff can apply for flexible working with effect from their first date of employment.

Maternity Pay

Staff on maternity leave are paid their full salary for the first 26 weeks of their period of leave.

Leave for the Death of a Baby or Pregnancy Loss

Any member of Staff affected by the death of baby or pregnancy loss will be granted leave paid at their normal salary, regardless of the type of loss.

Sands is a vibrant, growing charity!

With a clear strategy, Sands is repositioning as a learning, developing organisation which aims to achieve excellence through people and offers a collegiate, collaborative working environment - making it an especially exciting time to join the charity.

Sands is an inclusive and diversity-friendly employer. We are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively. We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and do not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, colour, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age or any other category protected by law.

To apply:

Please submit your CV, together with a supporting statement that demonstrates how you meet the criteria in the person specification to recruitment@sands.org.uk.

CVs and supporting statements should be sent as attachments to an email in either Word or PDF format. The title of the attachments should be your first name, surname and either CV or supporting statement e.g. "NAME.. CV"

Please also complete the Diversity and Equality Monitoring Form and send this with your application.

Closing date for applications: **8th March 2026 23:59pm**

Interview Date: **Week commencing the 30th March 2026**

As we have limited staff resources we are unable to provide candidates with feedback about their applications. **Interviews will be held online**

Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Bereavement Support and Counselling
Responsible to:	Director of Volunteering & Bereavement Support
Location:	Home Based with some UK travel
Salary:	£56,000 Per annum plus £312 Home Worker Allowance
Contract:	Permanent
Hours:	35 hours per week

Main purpose of the job:

Sands is looking to recruit an outstanding and people-focused candidate to lead our Bereavement Support Services Team. This is a high-profile role which is responsible for ensuring that all those approaching Sands for support receive an excellent service that meets their individual needs, that the quality of support provided remains consistently high and all team members are appropriately managed and supported. The role provides an opportunity to make real change by driving the organisational and team strategies to make the support that Sands provides accessible to bereaved families from all backgrounds within the community, as well as groups at higher risk of experiencing stillbirth and neonatal death.

With demonstrable experience of delivering and managing trauma informed bereavement support services and counselling at a strategic level, you will possess an excellent understanding of grief theory and bereavement support and be qualified accordingly. Additionally, you will have experience of working with and providing services for diverse communities and have a good understanding of their specific needs.

As this role will require you to lead a highly motivated and diverse team who are all home-based, you will have excellent people management skills and be able to support your team accordingly. You will have outstanding verbal and written communication skills and be able to develop high quality services which remain responsive to the changing needs of external stakeholders. With excellent relationship building skills, you will demonstrate a high level of empathy in all aspects of your work.

A high level of project leadership skills is essential, as is the ability to produce complex statistical reports and analyse data and trends. A thorough understanding of safeguarding in the context of baby loss and a commitment to ensuring excellent practice is also required.

This is a key role at Sands heading up the UK's leading bereavement support services team for baby loss. It is an opportunity to make real change by driving the organisational and team strategies to reach more people and higher risk groups, through traditional and digital/innovative channels. Leading a dedicated team of around 16 staff you can shape the future of service delivery, and ensure Sands provides support whenever and wherever people need us.

You will work with colleagues and teams across the organisation to ensure best practice is embedded at all key touch points and play a role ensuring that significant events and moments in the year are providing the right support, information and activities.

You will work with the team, Director and CEO to help drive change and best practice in the sector through thought leadership and implementation of best practice.

The overall aims of this role are to:

- drive the bereavement support strategy for Sands to deliver choice, excellence and support for all, including the introduction of a counselling tier
- ensure that innovation and thought leadership enable Sands to continue to evolve, improve and develop the bereavement support that is offered
- ensure that bereavement support is a 'golden thread' throughout Sands, ensuring that all staff are equipped to engage with bereaved parents in the different contexts of their work
- effectively inspire, support and manage the BSS team
- ensure that those approaching the organisation receive excellent support services that meet their needs
- ensure that all support services have the capacity to grow in order to meet demand in both diversity and capacity, with particular focus on digital support
- ensure that the quality of all support offered remains consistently and demonstrably high and that there is a constant striving for diversification and improvement
- Provide safeguarding expertise and process as Deputy Safeguarding Lead for Sands

Principal tasks and responsibilities:

Strategy, planning and budget management

- As a member of the Leadership Group contribute to key decisions relating to strategic direction as well as delivery of objectives
- Lead and/or contribute to relevant cross-organisational projects and programmes for Sands
- Demonstrate impact; set and report on annual objectives and KPIs for the Bereavement Support Services (BSS) team

Leadership and development of Sands Bereavement Support Services

- Motivate and lead the BSS team, setting individual and team objectives
- Review, manage and improve staff performance as required
- Deliver the key changes needed in support of our strategic objectives, including the introduction of a counselling tier
- Ensure that the voices of bereaved parents are central in reviewing and developing service provision and bereavement support resources

Service Delivery

- Ensure that Sands services offer consistently excellent bereavement support to anyone affected by pregnancy or baby loss
- Audit all Sands support channels and online spaces for quality and impact
- Maintain 'Helplines Partnership' accreditation status.

Oversee Sands Bereavement Support Resources

- Ensure that all Sands' bereavement support resources are factually accurate, reflect up to date best practice in bereavement support and are accessible and inclusive.
- Develop new bereavement support materials as needed.

Wider organisational work

- Work with teams across Sands to embed best practice in bereavement support
- Ensure that there is collaboration between BSS and all Sands teams when engaging with bereaved parents so that an excellent standard of support is maintained
- Provide specialist knowledge to support wider Sands teams in delivering their areas of work

Governance

- Monitor Safeguarding data on a regular basis and act as the second line of support for BSSO's in a safeguarding situation

- Ensure that BSS are compliant and uphold Data Protection procedures and ensure relevance to BSS
- Set KPIs and service performance measures for service improvement
- Extend quality assurance to ensure that all staff responding via BSS support channels are appropriately trained and supported.
- Monitor Safeguarding data on a regular basis and act as the second line of support for BSSOs in a safeguarding situation
- Ensure that BSS are compliant and uphold Data Protection procedures
- Ensure relevant staff receive clinical supervision according to Sands' clinical supervision policy.

As an Ambassador for Sands

This role requires you to foster excellent working relationships with all bereavement support service stakeholders across the baby loss community such as bereaved parents, health professionals, researchers and funders, and to represent Sands professionally.

This will require you to develop excellent working relationships, and:

- Be a 'hands on' manager and develop warm, empathic and trusting relationships with all bereavement support services staff.
- Facilitate supportive and inspiring face to face/virtual awaydays with the BSS team.
- Offer regular 1-1s with direct reports, both face-to-face and virtually.
- Be available when necessary for emergency communications as Head of Team.

Other regular duties

- Attendance at internal meetings
- Regularly attend and actively contribute to the Sands Leadership Group meetings.
- Attend other Sands' meetings as required, including staff away days.
- Attend and participate in other face to face events, including memorials and volunteer engagement
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the role as required by the Director of Volunteering and Bereavement Support, Chief Executive and Board of Trustees.

This Job Description is not contractual and is liable to change over time with prior notice given.

