Together, We Are Sands

Sands Impact 2025-2026



Saving babies' lives.
Supporting bereaved families.

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Welcome

Every day in the UK, parents and families are experiencing the heartbreak and devastation of pregnancy and baby loss. Too many still don't know why their loss happened and aren't being offered support that's right for them. That's why our work continues to focus on saving babies' lives and supporting bereaved families.

At Sands we put people at the heart of all we do. It's what makes Sands such a special organisation. And it means our work has a real and lasting impact on our incredible community. It's also why investing in the people who create the Sands community is so important.

This year we developed new, improved training for volunteers, so they can give crucial, life-saving peer support in local neighbourhoods when and where it's needed. It's heartening to see this vital support reaching more bereaved people in their own communities.

We've also broadened the support and activities on offer across Sands. Because everyone's experience is different, we're making sure we give people choice and personalised support that's right for them. Whether that's sharing an EasyRead version of our Bereavement Support Book, inviting someone to join a support group that recognises how their culture and background affect their grief journey, or helping someone feel seen through a social media post that reflects how they're feeling.

We don't want anyone to feel alone, and we want everyone to know Sands welcomes them. We're here, always. And this report will show you just some of the ways we've reached more people and connected them to Sands this year.

It will also show you how, through the power of people speaking out, change is happening. Our community's voices are at the heart of our growing local campaigning activity alongside our national campaigning and influencing across all four UK nations.

We've achieved so much already, but we know we can't deliver all the change we want to see on our own. That's why our leadership of programmes like the National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP) is so important. The NBCP demonstrates why Sands builds powerful partnerships - by working with parents, NHS professionals, Royal Colleges, other third sector organisations, politicians and policy-makers, the pathways are making better bereavement care possible across the UK.



It was a milestone moment in November 2025 when the NHS announced that the pathways are now included in its plans to improve maternity and neonatal services in England. By embedding bereavement care standards into routine practice, NHS services can significantly improve outcomes, reduce trauma and rebuild public trust in maternity and neonatal care.

That theme of collaboration shines through in this report. The relationships Sands builds, whether with fundraisers, volunteers, researchers, corporate supporters or organisations like Tommy's, our partner in the Sands and Tommy's Joint Policy Unit, mean we can speak with a collective voice on baby loss, challenge for change and, together, create a better future.

There's a growing movement of people committed to saving babies' lives and ensuring anyone touched by pregnancy and baby loss gets the support they need. Thank you for being part of it, and for being part of our Sands community. I recognise that your involvement is perhaps personal, just like mine. And having you as an ally means bereaved parents like me, and maybe you, can make a difference together.

David Hall,
Chair of Sands Trustees



The year in numbers



Over
580,000
people accessed our pregnancy and baby loss support and safer pregnancy advice

245
volunteer-led support services in communities across the UK, including monthly support groups and Sands United Football Clubs

44
dedicated support group sessions for African and Caribbean parents, South Asian parents, men and those who have experienced Termination For Medical Reasons

100%
of hospital trusts in England, and
100%
of hospital boards in Scotland, are now on the National Bereavement Care Pathway; pathways are in development in Wales and Northern Ireland

Over
6,900
training and learning opportunities for health, care and community-based professionals

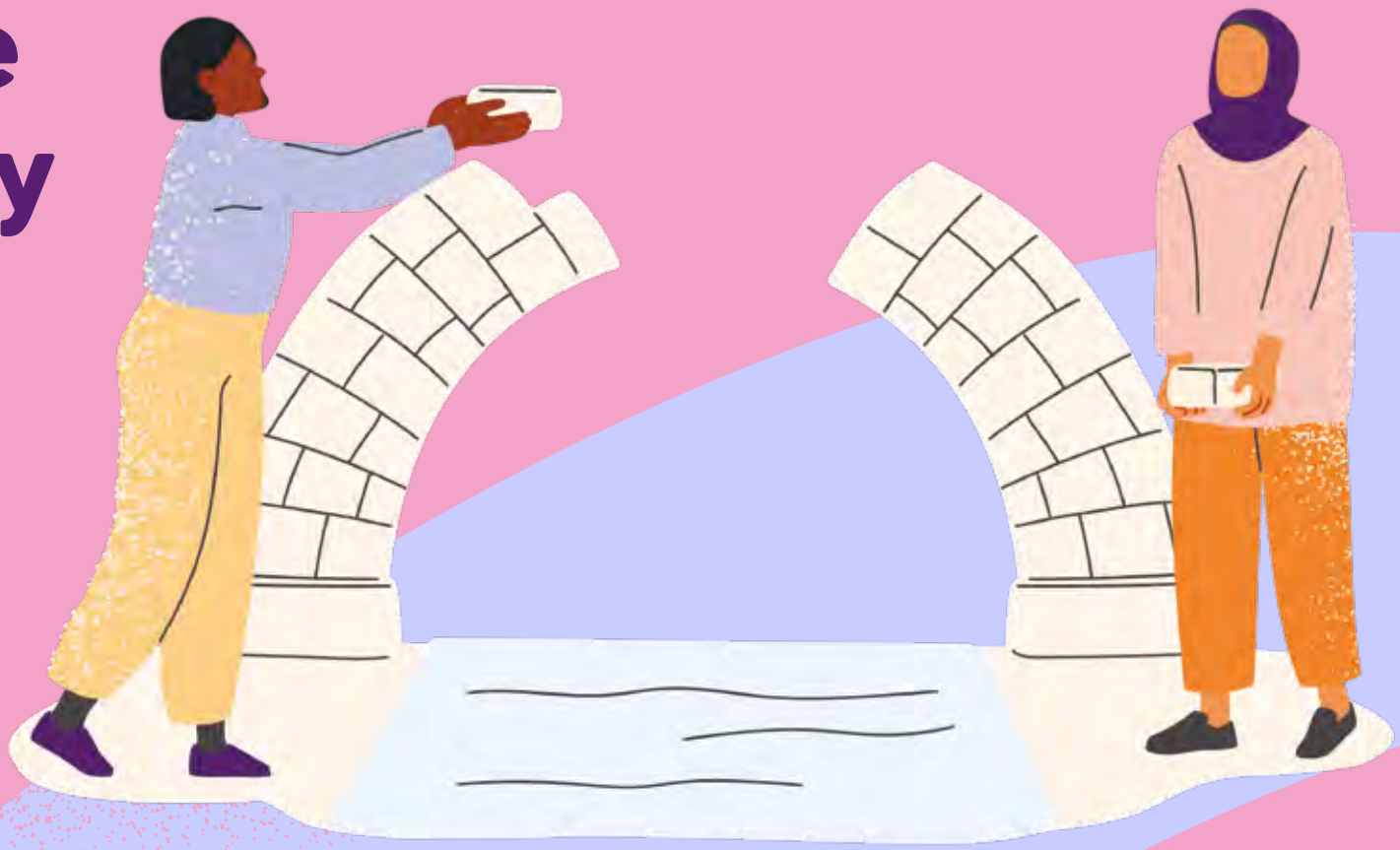
Over
10,600
e-actions taken by campaigners on local and national issues

1,311
media mentions of Sands

88
organisations signed up as Baby Loss Awareness Week Champions

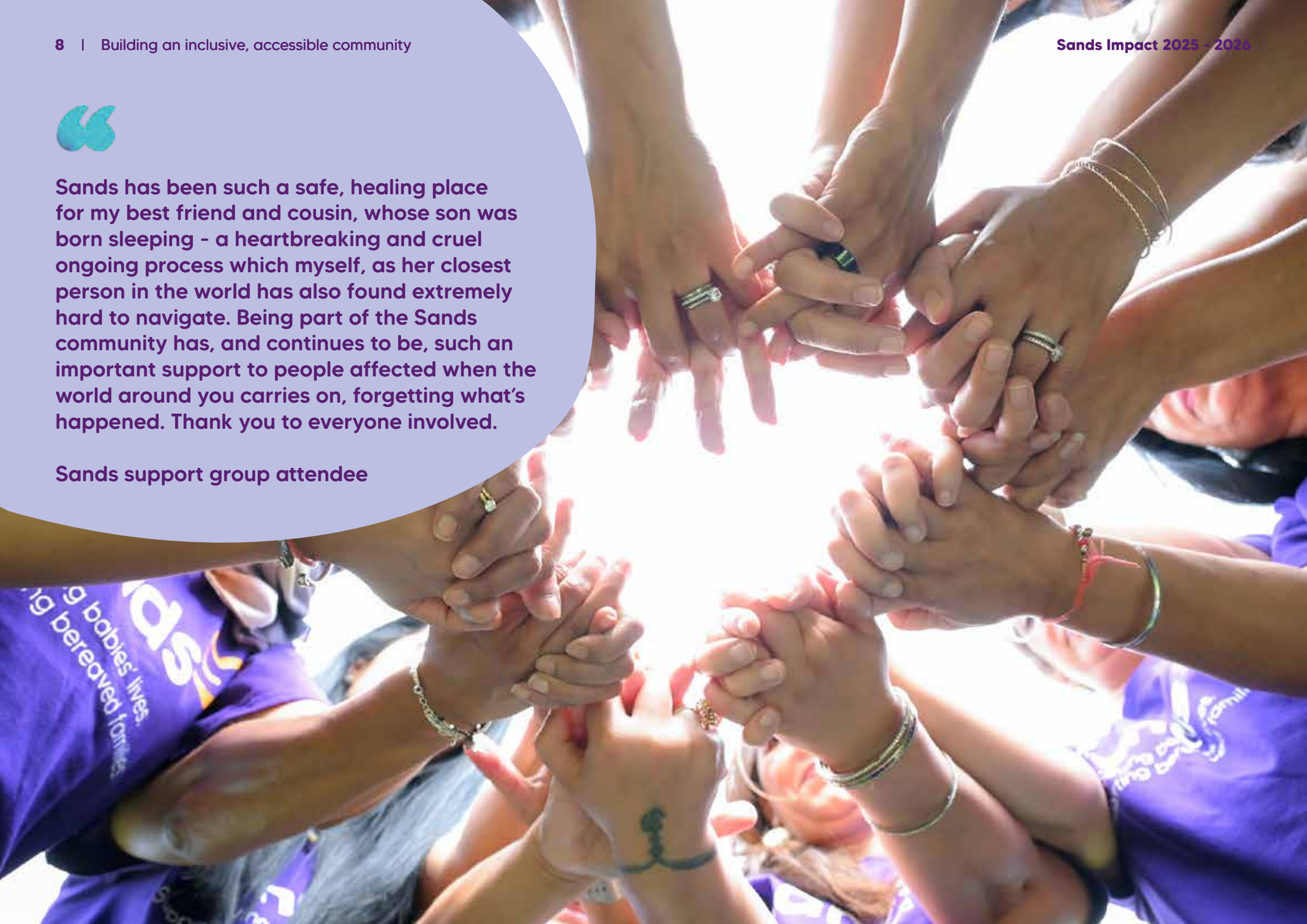
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Building an inclusive, accessible community



Sands has been such a safe, healing place for my best friend and cousin, whose son was born sleeping - a heartbreaking and cruel ongoing process which myself, as her closest person in the world has also found extremely hard to navigate. Being part of the Sands community has, and continues to be, such an important support to people affected when the world around you carries on, forgetting what's happened. Thank you to everyone involved.

Sands support group attendee



Welcoming everyone who needs our support

Together, we're creating a society where everyone can get the bereavement support that's right for them

100s of face-to-face and online peer support activities run by our UK-wide volunteers

44

dedicated support group sessions for men, African and Caribbean parents, South Asian parents and those who have experienced Termination For Medical Reasons

Bereavement support resources available in **13 languages,**

EasyRead and audio versions

153

attendees at African and Caribbean, and South Asian online support meetings

4

bespoke events for parents from African, Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds

Making space for everyone to feel understood

Memory-making events created especially for parents from African and Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds provided a safe space for the kind of comfort and connection many parents tell us they struggle to find. Black and South Asian women face some of the highest rates of baby death. Yet their experiences often go unspoken, leaving families feeling isolated as they navigate life after losing their baby.

Candle-making and diya-decorating workshops in London and Birmingham brought parents together to create meaningful keepsakes. More importantly, the events ensured everyone felt seen and understood. Together, parents honoured and remembered their babies and talked openly about their loss.

> **By pausing together, by naming the love and the longing, we honoured not only the little ones we lost but also the strength of those who continue to carry their stories.**
>
> Feedback from a parent and event attendee





> **Creating the candles and painting the diya offered a meaningful way to channel our grief into something therapeutic. It was a truly lovely event, and the keepsakes I brought home now remind me of the sense of peace I felt during the session.**
>
> Feedback from a parent and event attendee



Proactively bringing people to Sands

Together, we're helping parents find the support they need

Helping more parents find support in their preferred language

This year we worked with healthcare professionals, including those in the community, to encourage bereaved parents whose first language isn't English to use LanguageLine.

LanguageLine translates the help and guidance given by our Bereavement Support Officers into parents' preferred language in real-time. This year, almost twice as many people accessed the service compared to last year, bringing more people into our community.

Reaching parents who may not know Sands is for them

Through our relationships with GPs, social workers and other healthcare professionals, we're reaching and reassuring bereaved parents that our services are for them, no matter who they are or their experience of baby loss. This year, healthcare professionals helped us connect with almost a third more bereaved parents than last year, simply by asking if they'd like Sands to get in touch.

30%

more third-party referrals to our bereavement support



Equipping Befrienders for every conversation

Sands' new Befriender Training Programme is making sure Befrienders are clear on their role and its boundaries and feel better equipped to respond to parents' needs now and as they change.

Volunteer Befrienders offer support to anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby. Many have personal experience, others bring professional insight, and all offer the kind of understanding that can help parents feel less alone in their grief.

The new training adds to volunteers' knowledge, skills and confidence, helping them provide safe, consistent support while looking after their own wellbeing too.

The seven modules incorporate valuable input from many of our 350 Befrienders, like Natalie, who received our support after her son Noah was stillborn in 2021. Natalie now volunteers with Leeds Sands, supporting other grieving parents and using social media to show people what to expect from a Sands support group, making that first step feel less daunting.



> **I attended my first support group only two weeks after losing Noah. And even though I was super anxious about going, I'm so glad that I did. For me, finding others that knew exactly what I was going through and how I felt really helped me. I needed to feel less alone and that I could get everything that was in my head out. And that's what the group allowed me to do.**
>
> Natalie, Befriender at Leeds Sands

Putting people's needs first

Together, we're finding new ways to show families they're not alone

Giving families new ways to honour traditions after a baby dies

We know from listening to parents that global holidays, religious and cultural festivals can be especially difficult. Sands' Forever Tied in Love campaign marking Raksha Bandhan is one of the ways we're acknowledging how different these moments can feel after a baby dies, while helping families find a meaningful way to be part of the tradition.

Raksha Bandhan, also known as Rakhi, is a Hindu festival that celebrates the connection between brothers and sisters. Traditionally, sisters tie a sacred thread – a Rakhi - around their brothers' wrists as a symbol of love, protection and lifelong connection.

For bereaved parents and siblings who've lost their brother or sister, it can be a painful reminder of a shared bond they're not able to celebrate together. With Sands, families were able to mark the August festival and their enduring love with a handmade Rakhi, crafted by volunteer knitting group, Knit Your Socks Off. Together, they knitted more than 1,000 Rakhis, each one featuring two entwined hearts – one for the sibling here and one for the sibling gone too soon.

Within days of going live on social media, over 1,000 Rakhis had been requested by bereaved families, showing how deeply important it is for parents to honour the enduring bond between siblings.





Founded in 2015 by Sbba Siddique, Knit Your Socks Off is a community of women who use knitting and crochet to connect, heal and give back. The group has supported numerous causes over the years – from premature baby clothing to Remembrance Day poppies – and has long been a supporter of Sands, creating blankets for the charity's Memory and Care Boxes.

Sbba Siddique said: "Each of us in the group has been touched by baby loss in some way. Through our knitting, we honour our own children and support others on the same journey. The Forever Tied in Love campaign has been especially meaningful – many of our volunteers have poured their hearts into every stitch."

As part of the campaign we spoke out on social media and in the press, helping to break the silence that still too many bereaved parents are facing. Sands supporter, Sita, shared her experience of baby loss and how her family have created new traditions around Raksha Bandhan. In doing so Sita helped us reach more people, as they engaged with her social media reel and shared it with others.

In 2018 Sita and her husband Rikesh were overflowing with excitement for the birth of their baby, a boy they named Arjun. Sadly, after a natural labour, Arjun passed away only 50 minutes after being born.

Sita said: "In South Asian culture, baby loss is still deeply taboo. Despite how common it is, no one talks about it. I never realised how many women around me had suffered losses, until they reached out after Arjun died. Quietly, gently, they tried to comfort me. I was stunned that I'd spent my whole life unaware of the grief these women carried in complete silence, often with no support at all."

Sita and Rikesh went on to have two daughters and as a family they talk about Arjun and celebrate his life.

Sita continued: "As Arjun was our firstborn, our daughters never got to meet him. But in the past year or so, they've come to understand that mummy and daddy have a baby named Arjun. They look at his photos, and to them, he's their 'cute baby brother'. As they grow, we'll share more about him - about the love we still carry, about the life that almost was.

"Every year on Arjun's birthday, we visit Brighton beach - the place where we scattered his ashes on his first birthday. It's a place of peace for us. His birthday often falls near Raksha Bandhan, a Hindu festival that celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters, so we include him in that celebration too. The girls tie a Rakhi for their brother, and we pray that he's happy and safe wherever he is on his journey."





A new awareness week to support South Asian families and drive change

Alongside our support for Black Baby Loss Awareness Week, Sands collaborated with bereaved parent and founder of the Asian Miscarriage Hub, Asiya Dawood, to support her launch of the first South Asian Baby Loss Awareness Week.

Many parents from the South Asian community continue to face inequalities in the rates of pregnancy and baby loss as well as racism, stereotyping and bias experienced by mothers in maternity care.

The week created a supportive environment for families to remember their babies and feel less alone in their grief and experiences. Throughout the week in August, we supported parents who chose to tell their stories so that lessons from their experiences could help prevent avoidable baby deaths in the future. Madhuri Bedi, Outreach Coordinator for South Asian Communities at Sands, took part in panel discussions, media interviews and events organised as part of the week.

The annual campaign will continue amplifying parents' voices, making sure inequalities in baby loss are challenged.

This first-ever South Asian Baby Loss Awareness Week has brought our community together, standing side by side, speaking openly about the longed-for babies who were gone too soon but will forever be loved. Throughout the week, we've broken through the many cultural stigmas and taboos that are sadly part of baby loss within our communities.

Instead, we created a space where pain was cradled with compassion, where tears were met with understanding and where silence was replaced with truth. That was the power, and the promise, of South Asian Baby Loss Awareness Week.

Asiya Dawood, founder of South Asian Baby Loss Awareness Week



Shaping support to meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ parents

A series of focus groups brought bereaved LGBTQIA+ parents together to share their experiences and views of maternity and neonatal care, and bereavement care and support, to help us understand how we can better support them.

Baby loss can feel isolating for any parent. But for parents within the LGBTQIA+ community, lack of understanding by those around them can make an incredibly difficult experience even harder.

From our training for healthcare professionals to our own bereavement support, we're already making our services and support more inclusive after listening to what parents told us.

Sands bereavement care training for healthcare teams, counsellors and therapists has been updated to reflect the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people. While all-staff training led by LGBT Mummies and shared at volunteer community days is helping our entire team consider the different experiences parents might bring to Sands.

Today, our welcome is more inclusive than ever. And work has begun on plans to provide specific support for LGBTQIA+ parents like Jess in the future.

Me and my wife experienced the stillbirth of our first son, Leo Phoenix, in 2016. He was conceived on our fifth round of fertility treatment - 3 IUI cycles and 2 IVF cycles. We were so, so close to finally having him home; he died at 37 weeks and 1 day. Needless to say, we were and are still simply heartbroken by the loss of our little dark-haired boy.

I quickly realised when I looked online or accessed help from charities and organisations - I rarely saw another couple from the LGBTQIA+ community. I've always had the sense and desire that there should be more for people. A safe space. A dedicated space. Not everyone needs it, of course. But for those who do, how important would that be?

The LGBTQIA+ community is diverse, and there are many ways to make a baby, and sadly, many ways to lose them too. Recognising elements of our experiences in the experiences of others can help people feel less alone. And I think, mostly, that's what grieving people want and need.

I'm really grateful to Sands for exploring this deeper and wanting to learn from the community, with the hope that they can create a safe space for people to connect and be safely supported.

Jess Clasby-Monk, mum to Leo Phoenix

Creating new ways for people to support their local Sands community

A new volunteer Group Assistant role is helping local Sands groups run more in-person and online support meetings and sessions.

After listening to volunteer feedback, we created the role so family and friends of bereaved parents who want to help create safe spaces can be part of Sands' community in a way that works for them.

The role, which doesn't require volunteers to have experience of baby loss, provides practical and organisational support behind the scenes, helping create welcoming spaces where bereaved parents can access peer support.

It gives loved ones and others who don't have direct experience of pregnancy loss or baby death the opportunity to make a meaningful difference. For families grieving their babies, it means more support close to home when they need it.

Recognising volunteers past and present

Sands Garden Day 2025 celebrated the dedicated volunteers who make Sands' support possible. And this year, we were joined by two special volunteers whose dedication and vision 45 years ago laid the foundations for the support that continues to touch hundreds of thousands of lives today.

Founders and patrons Bel Mooney and Hazelanne Lewis were part of the judging panel for the Sands Volunteer Awards 2025 and presented awards named in their honour, recognising others who share their commitment to Sands.



The Hazelanne Lewis Award for Leadership: Stephen Kelly from Sands United FC Basingstoke.

> **Setting up Sands United FC Basingstoke and supporting local bereaved parents and families takes a lot of emotional strength, time and dedication. When we were setting up Sands, the advice given to fathers was 'don't talk about it, it will only upset her' as though it was not normal to be upset after baby loss. This also meant almost all the calls came from mothers and left fathers unsupported. Stephen's kindness, encouragement and respect have clearly made such a difference to those grieving for their babies.**
>
> **Sands Founder and Patron, Hazelanne Lewis**



The Bel Mooney Award for Raising Awareness: Kaylee Hargreaves, Sammy Bridges and Paris Kelynack from Isle of Wight Sands.

> Kaylee, Sammy and Paris have worked tirelessly to bring support back to bereaved families in the Isle of Wight. One in two of us, or somebody we know, has experienced the loss of a pregnancy or death of a baby. Talking and writing about baby loss is not easy, but it's vital that parents' voices are heard so that other bereaved families know they are not alone, and their experiences help improve care and save more babies' lives.
>
> Sands Founder and Patron, Bel Mooney





Award winners 2025

Simon Stocker
Rachel Burrell
Phillippa Crombleholme
Megan Jones Davies
Maria Gormley
Hawa Bhula
Geoff Davies
Fiona Donald
Kaylee Hargreaves
Sammy Bridges
Paris Kelynack
Stephen Kelly

Meeting needs locally and nationally

Together, we're reaching bereaved parents, wherever they are

Making time for the people who give their time

Our volunteers give so much to Sands, and our Community Days are one way we can make sure they feel supported too.

The days bring together the incredible individuals who so generously give their time to support families in their communities. This year, we welcomed more than 90 volunteers across five Community Days in Glasgow, Antrim, Bristol, Birmingham and York.

From Befrienders and Hospital Liaison Volunteers to Sands United Football team managers, volunteers connected over shared experiences and conversations that weren't always easy, but mattered.

The days also made space for celebration, recognising the incredible contribution volunteers make to Sands.

Rated

9/10

by volunteers

100%

of volunteers would attend again



Creating more opportunities for families to find support locally

Sands volunteers continued to take their unwavering support and understanding into communities across all four nations. Alongside existing activities to support families, raise awareness and bring parents together, volunteer groups introduced new ways to reach people and respond to their needs.

A year of incredible local activity

More people than ever got involved in creating local Ribbon Displays for Baby Loss Awareness week; over 2,000 packets of seeds were shared in random acts of kindness during Sands Awareness Week and over 30 Winter Lights events happened this year.



New and different ways volunteers are providing more peer support

Wreath-making

walk and talks

Easter egg hunts

candle lighting

carol services

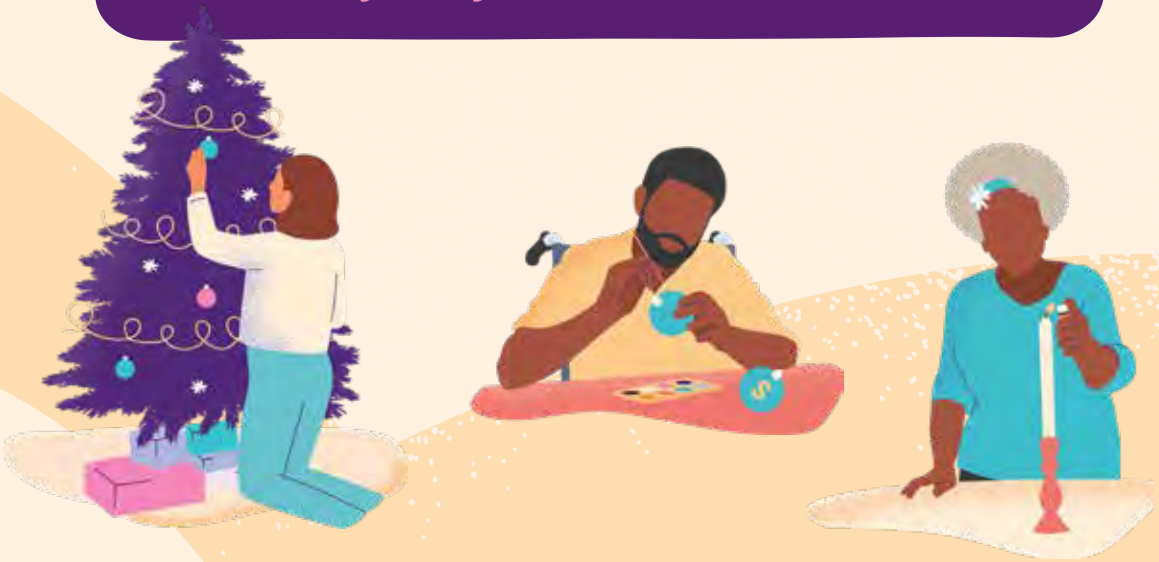
Lights of Love services

choirs

run clubs

Christmas tree festivals

family days



When planning the Dumfries and Galloway Lights of Love Christmas service, one of the most important things for me is making sure it feels welcoming and supportive for every family who attends.

Being part of the Christmas service is very meaningful to me as a Befriender. Seeing everything come together after so much planning and then seeing the comfort it brings to bereaved families, is really special.

I think what makes it so special is that it gives families a chance to come together to remember their babies and feel supported at what can be such a difficult time of the year. It's a privilege to help organise the event and to help create a space where families can feel a little less alone. Knowing that the service can bring comfort to families makes all the planning worthwhile.

Ashley, Befriender and volunteer at Sands Dumfries and Galloway



"It made us feel seen..."

Social media influencers Cole and Abbie have previously supported Sands helping others raise funds and awareness in their local area. Sadly, in 2025, they had a devastating loss of their own, with one of their twin babies dying during pregnancy. Cole and Abbie really wanted to use their platform to both fundraise for us and to show how important it is to bereaved parents to be able to talk about their experiences and access support, helping them feel seen and understood. They shared how attending the Dumfries and Galloway Sands Lights of Love event impacted them.

We had no idea what to expect, but it exceeded every expectation...our stories matched and listening to someone else's hurt our chest and throats hard when this is what we're dealing with right now...we lit a candle for our baby we lost, along with everyone else in the room and put our tag on the tree...in the silence, we had a moment to reflect on what we are going through without all the noise and just pushing through life trying to push our grief to the side...I'm so glad we went. It made us feel seen and everything we are doing just now for our [fundraising] challenge - it gave me even more determination.

Cole and Abbie

More support close to home for men

Sands support for men continues to grow and reach more corners of the UK. This year, Sands United Cornwall and Sands United Isle of Wight joined the squad of volunteer-led clubs striking up conversations about baby loss.

Twenty-five-year-old Kieran Wildman lost his son Arlo-Isaac in 2023. Motivated by his own experience, Kieran wanted to create a space for others who've experienced similar losses to come together locally, both to play football and to support each other.

The team has had a really positive response. Now there's somewhere set up for people to come. Whether it's to play, talk or just be around others who get it – everyone is welcome.

Kieran, dad to Arlo-Isaac and Sands United Isle of Wight team manager



Spotlight on...Portadown Sands

Portadown Sands put on a special Mother's Day painting event designed with wellbeing in mind. It also offered an opportunity for anyone navigating their life after pregnancy or baby loss to find understanding and connection with others in a relaxed, safe environment. At the end of the session, participants left with a personal piece of artwork.

Life is never quite the same after pregnancy or baby loss. While every day can carry its own sadness, Mother's Day can be especially difficult. Hosting a creative event is different from our normal group and means people can come along who might not want to speak about their experience but can still feel supported.

We've held other creative events, like wreath making at Christmas, and they always attract good numbers because they offer a special way to remember your pregnancy or baby, while providing something meaningful to take home as a memory. Parents can take away what they have made, keep it around their home and cherish it as a new memory of their baby.

This Mother's Day painting event was especially meaningful because it was facilitated by a bereaved parent, which made the day feel even more special for those attending.

Drena Kane, volunteer Befriender at Portadown Sands

Spotlight on...Leeds Sands

From yoga to rock painting, Leeds Sands brought more mindfulness into their support sessions this year. The sessions helped participants find moments of calm and new ways to manage emotions that can feel overwhelming.

We recognise that everyone's grief journey looks different so create a calendar of events, with a mix of face to face group meetings, creative support sessions, online meetings and outdoor walk and talks. In the last year we've worked with our local community to organise a yoga session, rock painting, walk and talk around a local park and ceramic vase painting.

These opportunities to get creative through hands on activities and explore different wellness practices have enabled us to widen our reach of whom we support.

The Leeds Sands team



Volunteers sow seeds of support in their communities

Sands groups across the UK spread comfort and hope in their communities by using Sands seed packets to connect with local people during Sands Awareness Week. From secret seed packet drops to garden-themed events and starting conversations on local high streets and in shopping centres, volunteers grew awareness of the support we offer and where to find us locally - one seed packet at a time.

> **It was lovely writing babies' names on seed markers and sometimes decorating them, then sowing the wildflower seeds from Sands in the garden and identifying the spot with personalised markers.**
>
> **Derby Sands**



> **This activity was so lovely to do this morning; the community garden is so beautiful and the volunteers so lovely and welcoming. We loved going along and planting the Sands wildflower seeds.**
>
> **Maria, Clacton-on-Sea Sands**





> **Thank you to everyone who stopped by to talk to us. We hope you planted all the seeds we gave out - over 50 packets.**
>
> **Bradford Sands**





Growing memorial gardens

Sands volunteer groups have helped set up an incredible 97 Sands memorial gardens across the UK. Each one gives bereaved families a place to go for peaceful reflection in familiar surroundings.

Frances, a Befriender and one of the volunteer gardeners at Bath Sands Garden of Reflection, describes the space as her happy place - a place of love and beauty.



When I'm at the garden, I often think of my daughter Pippa [who was stillborn]. It's a lovely space if people don't want to attend our usual support meeting. The garden is a positive, joyful place.

We're out in all weathers and every season, making sure it's a welcoming, calming space for visitors. Parents visit all year round, so it's important for the space to be fitting for their reflection and their children.

The focus of the garden is a brick circle, where bereaved parents can have bricks engraved with their babies' names installed. Almost every time I visit, I find a memento left by a bereaved parent near the brick paver.

Each year, bereaved families gather at the garden after our baby remembrance service, which we hold with the support of the Royal United Hospital Bath and the staff at Haycombe Cemetery. We never know how many families will turn up, but Sands is an open-doors charity and everyone is always welcome.

Frances, mum to Pippa, Befriender and volunteer gardener at Bath Sands

Raising awareness of our cause and work

Together, we're breaking the silence for every baby gone too soon

50%

of adults said that they, or someone they know, have experienced at least one form of pregnancy or baby loss

Source: YouGov Plc (August 2023)

23%

of the general population have heard of Sands

Source: Nfp Research (August 2025)

40%

of those with experience of loss within their family or close circle are aware of Sands

3.2 billion

opportunities to hear about Sands and our work

2.8 million

people reached during Baby Loss Awareness Week

2,900+

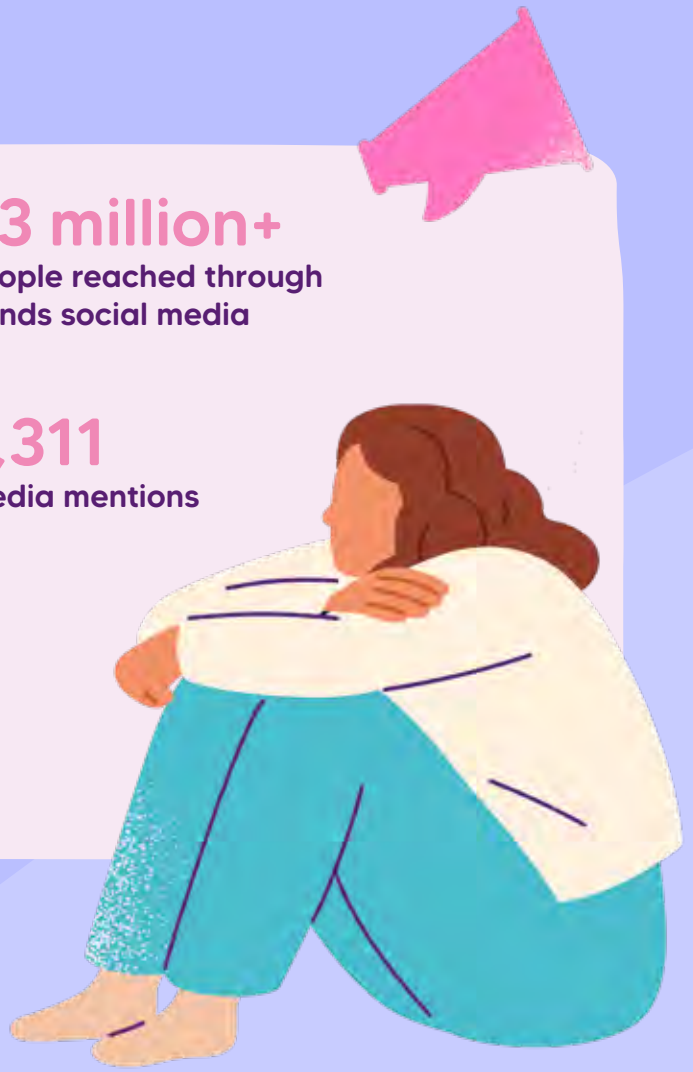
connections with bereaved parents for Say Their Name Day

23 million+

people reached through Sands social media

1,311

media mentions



Helping more people recognise that Sands is a place for them

More people now know they're welcome at Sands, whatever their background or experience of pregnancy or baby loss, thanks to our renewed brand.

We want anyone affected by the death of a baby to feel able to turn to Sands. Always. But parents and families told us they were unsure whether our support was meant for them or if their experience 'counted'. Many said they weren't sure what we do.

It meant that for all those people who came to us for support – the parents and families we could welcome and reassure - there were many more missing out.

More than 10,000 pieces of feedback and 18 months of listening, testing and perfecting led to an evolved Sands brand that reflects the world we live in today, our Sands community and our values: being person-centred and evidence-led.

Compassion remains at the core of our brand, which is now clearer, bolder, inclusive and more accessible for the people who need our support.

> **I've seen how your lot at Sands have changed how you look. It looks ever so friendly now.**
>
> **Bereaved Grandad**

> **I received comments from separate people with African and Caribbean heritage whilst at events with the new branding on display, saying that it was really warm and inviting.**
>
> **Jordan Russell, Outreach Co-ordinator at Sands**



2 Saving babies' lives





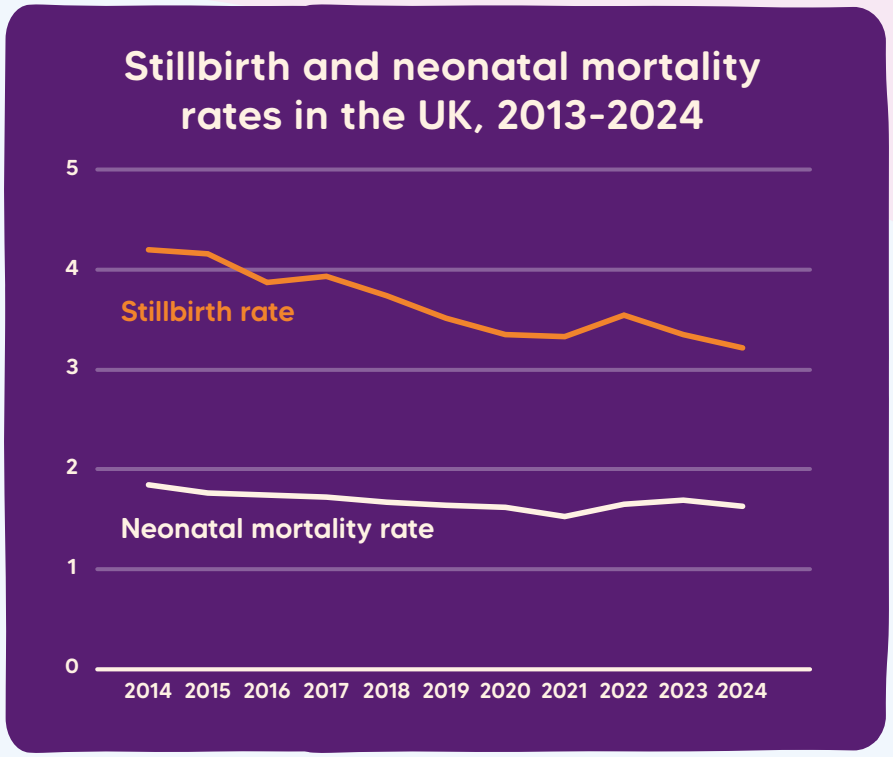
I'm part of the Sands Insights Network. It's an online space run by Sands' research team, where bereaved parents can get involved in Sands-led projects, and projects that academics and researchers are undertaking with support from Sands. All the projects are helping to shape research, training and policy for better maternity and bereavement care.

I volunteer my time in Angus' stead. Although he never got the chance to walk in this world, if Angus' story can help improve maternity care in any way, then that will be a footprint that he gets to leave in this world.

Sinead, mum to Angus and Sands Insights Network volunteer

Improving safety in pregnancy, birth and the neonatal period

Together, we're doing everything in our power to drive change, so the UK can be one of the safest places in the world to have a baby



Source: MBRRACE-UK data published in 2026

Black babies are over **2x** more likely to be stillborn compared to white babies

Babies born in the most deprived areas are **2.5x more likely** to die during the first 28 days compared to babies in the least deprived areas



Source: Saving Babies' Lives 2025: A report on progress Sands & Tommy's Policy Unit using data published by MBRRACE-UK in 2025

Putting evidence into action to save babies' lives

Together, we're creating evidence-based ways of working, so there is better, safer maternity care

78

research studies supported

Taking us closer to understanding why babies die, paving the way for safer care and making bereavement care and support better for everyone affected by pregnancy loss or baby death.

Shaping stillbirth research around the questions that matter most

This year, Sands was part of a valuable opportunity giving bereaved parents and healthcare professionals the opportunity to shape research into stillbirth.

There's still so much we need to understand about stillbirth, and the James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) into Stillbirth set out to identify the questions that matter most to parents and the clinicians who care for them.

Sands helped guide the project as a member of the PSP steering group, and we invited our community to share their thoughts and experiences through surveys and workshops. Now, we're ready to support researchers in prioritising and addressing the questions most important to our community, as well as develop projects in our own right to identify and highlight 'what works' in key areas of care.



What we've learnt so far: Where research needs to focus

Preventing stillbirth
How can we better diagnose, treat and prevent stillbirths?

Tackling inequalities
Why do differences in stillbirth rates exist between groups and how can we tackle them?

Better access to care
With the current tests and treatments available, how can we ensure families across the UK have access to better care and support to prevent stillbirths?

The questions that matter most:

1. How can placental problems be detected, prevented and treated in current and future pregnancies to reduce stillbirth/ perinatal death?

2. Why are babies who are the right size for their gestation still dying from unknown causes, and what tests could help identify those at risk?

3. How can emerging technologies help predict and prevent stillbirth and perinatal death by identifying those most at risk?

4. Does variation in maternity unit policies lead to disparities in perinatal death rates? Would disseminating learning from the best performing hospitals reduce perinatal death rates?

5. How can it be ensured that medical professionals listen to the voices and instincts of women and birthing people? And could this reduce perinatal deaths?

6. Why are stillbirth rates higher among women and birthing people from certain ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds, and how can we reduce this inequity?



Bringing the next generation of antenatal care closer

Sands and the Wellcome Leap In Utero research programme brought together colleagues and experts from across policy, practice, regulation and research to explore how promising new technologies could help prevent stillbirth.

Recognising emerging complications in utero and ensuring a timely, safe delivery could halve the number of babies who die before or during birth after 28 weeks of pregnancy. But the technologies used in UK maternity care aren't good enough at picking up all the babies at risk of dying or being born early, small or sick.

However, the In Utero research programme, led by former Sands Trustee, and now ambassador, Professor Sarah Stock, is developing innovative, cutting-edge technologies that could change the outcome for thousands of babies yet to be born.

Wellcome Leap In Utero is a $50 million global programme focused on new technologies that can be used at scale to measure and predict how a baby is developing in the womb. These innovations could transform safety for families.

Identifying individual risk

The research is paving the way for accurate, personalised risk assessment, so the right care is consistently offered to the right families at the right time and more parents get to take their baby home.

- **Identify risk early** – new blood tests and scans could show who is most likely to get serious pregnancy conditions like pre-eclampsia and fetal growth restrictions before they develop, with an 80%+ accuracy, as early as 12 weeks of pregnancy
- **Detect problems in time** – innovations like wearable fetal movement monitors could help spot developing complications before it's too late
- **Show when urgent action is needed** – new technologies can help measure oxygen levels in the baby and placenta to show clearly when babies are at risk and birth is the only safe option

Transforming antenatal care

Together, we explored the opportunities and challenges of scaling up these technologies to transform maternity safety across the UK and created a shared vision for antenatal care. More immediately, Professor Sarah Stock is collaborating with stakeholders and using the programme's findings to develop an ambitious route map for implementing the next generation of antenatal care.



[Globally] a baby is stillborn every 16 seconds. It's a number that's hard to comprehend – more than two million lives lost every year across the world. We owe pregnant women and their babies better care. The researchers behind the In Utero programme have shown that this goal is now within our reach. We want to turn those breakthroughs into something truly powerful – a safer pregnancy for every woman, everywhere.

Professor Sarah Stock, former Trustee at Sands, Sands ambassador and In Utero programme lead



This work is so important for bereaved parents, whose stories show that we need far more accurate information about how babies are developing in the womb to support safer, more positive pregnancies. We would like all families to have access to technologies that are proven to work, in a safe, caring system that continues to put families first.

Clea Harmer, Chief Executive at Sands

Supporting the case for independent family advocates

To understand the difference independent advocacy makes for parents whose babies died while in maternity or neonatal care, Sands helped researchers hear directly from bereaved and harmed parents about their experiences of the Maternity and Neonatal Independent Senior Advocate (MNISA) pilot service.

The pioneering advocate role was established to support women and families who experienced serious incidents in maternity or neonatal care. As an independent point of contact, advocates helped families make sense of what happened, navigate investigations, find support and get their questions and concerns heard by healthcare organisations to influence change.

The NIHR and NHS England-funded evaluation concluded that the role made a meaningful difference to families who experienced the heartbreak of pregnancy and baby loss while in maternity or neonatal care. The research findings were published in a peer-reviewed paper, helping inform future decisions about support for bereaved families.

Key findings

- All families said the MNISA role should continue
- Families valued having a consistent, compassionate point of contact who could explain medical processes in plain language, support them through investigations and help rebuild trust with healthcare providers
- Families who didn't receive support said they would have valued having access to a MNISA

Although we had our voices, it felt very much like we were silenced. Our advocate provided us, almost like the pedestal, to be heard and that's all we wanted, to be heard, to be listened to, just to be validated and believed.

Mother whose baby died in the neonatal period

Our findings show MNISAs helped families feel heard, supported and empowered while providing opportunities for systemic learning and change. [We] will continue to share and disseminate these insights. Our partnership with Sands ensured we could engage directly with families, grounding the evaluation in their experiences and amplifying voices that are too often overlooked.

Professor Jenny Shand, Director of RSET, Professor of Applied Health Research at University College London



At Sands, we're proud to have supported this important research and to continue advocating for bereaved parents and families. We believe every parent deserves to be heard, supported and treated with compassion - especially in the most difficult of times.

The report will be given to members of the newly formed National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce which is reporting to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. Sands will be looking to see how they respond and making sure the government understands the potential impact for the MNISA role and the importance of advocates in helping parents navigate the healthcare system.

Clea Harmer, Chief Executive at Sands

Strengthening parents' role in our work to save babies' lives

The Sands Insights Network membership grew this year as more parents who want to use their experience and knowledge to help save babies' lives joined the online community. Through the Network, parents are helping shape our work to make care safer and build the evidence we need to drive wider improvements in maternity and neonatal safety.

The expanding Network also connects parents with opportunities to contribute to Sands' policy and campaigning work as well as external projects where their collective insight can deepen understanding of why babies die. Together, they're making sure parents' experiences count.

Improving safety in pregnancy, birth and the neonatal period

Together, we're making the UK one of the safest places in the world to have a baby

Changing how we talk about babies' movements to reduce stillbirths

Sands' joint research in 2025 with Dr Tomasina Stacey, midwife and Senior Lecturer in Midwifery and Maternal Health Research at King's College London, has led to potentially life-saving changes in the information available and advice given to parents about their babies' movements during pregnancy.

As well as reviewing existing research, we brought together experts in maternity policy, practice and research with charity groups and bereaved parents to listen and learn from their experiences.

Parents like Suehelen, whose daughter Miracle was stillborn at 39 weeks following reduced movements, told us they needed more detailed, clearer and consistent information about what 'normal' movements should feel like. Others wanted to understand why their babies' movements were so important. While some parents said they didn't know about stillbirth or that it could happen to them.

Building on the research and subsequent report, this year, Sands worked with Tommy's, the NHS and other organisations, including Kicks Count, Five X More and Mama Academy to develop resources that could help save babies' lives.



Now parents can access comprehensive, clear guidance to help them understand their baby's movements, trust their maternal instincts and feel confident about seeking help if something doesn't feel right. The resources also explain the link between reduced movements, reduced oxygen to the baby and stillbirth, so parents can see how stillbirth could happen to them.

From what to expect to the changes that may indicate something isn't right and when to call their maternity unit to be checked, the updated leaflets reflect what parents told us they needed to help them protect their baby. The resource is available via the NHS in 44 languages.

We're also helping healthcare professionals understand and share these important messages with mothers through a series of webinars in collaboration with Tommy's and led by maternity safety experts and researchers.

The Saving Babies' Lives Care Bundle - an initiative aimed at improving maternity care and reducing baby loss in England - recommends that all women and birthing people should get an evidence-based leaflet about reduced fetal movements by 28 weeks of pregnancy. This leaflet should be used as a starting point for personalised, detailed conversations about babies' movements throughout pregnancy.

Dr Julia Clark, Research Officer at Sands





Women and birthing people should call their maternity unit and get checked straightaway if:

- Baby is moving less
- Movements feel weaker
- Movements have stopped

Whilst I was in my second day of labour, with my first and only daughter, I don't remember what time but my daughter started moving less than usual and her movements became faint but like she was still hanging on. I remember speaking on the phone to my midwife about it and she said if I feel that my baby is moving less I should come in, that's all.

She was adamant but never explained why. But once I got off the phone my daughter was moving fine, so I proceeded, doing my best with the unbearable contractions.

There were many times where I spoke to my midwife. But what she didn't do in the most vulnerable and crucial time of our life is tell me why I needed to come in, what reduced fetal movements mean, why it happens and if they start and stop and start again it doesn't mean the baby is ok. Our life could have been so different if they had told me the truth.

I'd never heard of a stillbirth before. The midwife could have explained, 'This is what a stillbirth is. A stillbirth is when the baby passes away after 24 weeks'... Just caring and being honest, telling the truth.

Suehelen, mum to Miracle and contributor to Sands' work to improve guidance about babies' movements in pregnancy

The Joint Policy Unit (JPU): Sands and Tommy's working together to save babies' lives

Sands and Tommy's share the belief that pregnancy loss and baby death are not inevitable and that policy change could save more babies' lives. But disparate data made it difficult to see where progress was – and wasn't – being made.

In 2022, we brought that data together and combined it with what bereaved parents tell us about their experience of baby loss to make the case for change impossible to ignore.

Since then, we've published annual reports tracking progress in reducing baby deaths and inequalities, identifying where care and policy are falling short and setting out the changes needed to save more babies' lives.

We use this evidence to keep up pressure on decision-makers and hold governments to account for reducing baby deaths and inequalities.

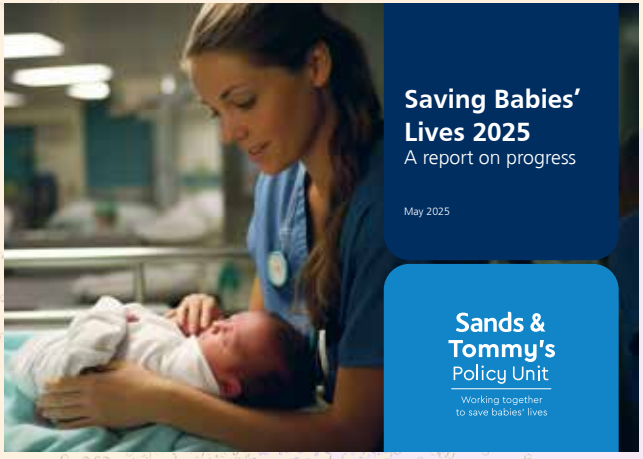
Keeping up the pressure to save babies' lives

The third annual Saving Babies' Lives Progress Report shows more of the same: Failure to meet government targets for reducing stillbirths and neonatal and maternal deaths has cost hundreds of babies' lives.

- The gap continues to grow between the number of babies dying in deprived areas and those in the least deprived areas of the UK
- The stillbirth rate of Asian babies has risen sharply
- Black babies are still twice as likely to be stillborn as white babies

We know that progress depends on policy changes that make saving babies' lives a national priority, and on a profoundly different approach to ensure far fewer parents and families suffer the heartbreak of losing their child.

That's why this year's report places stronger focus on the policy changes needed and sets out proposed national ambitions to reduce stillbirth, neonatal death and preterm birth in England, matching the best-performing countries in Europe over the next 10 years.



The JPU called for a target date of 2035 to align these new maternity ambitions with the NHS 10 Year Plan for England. To achieve this, we've identified ten specific, actionable priorities for policymakers and will continue pressing for urgent change to give more parents a better chance of taking their baby home.

Since publishing the report, we've shared the evidence and recommendations with politicians and policymakers; the report has been referenced in the Westminster Parliament, downloaded more than 700 times and cited in numerous media articles.





Influencing policy before decisions are final

In the last 12 months, the JPU gave its expert views and recommendations in response to six formal consultations, including:

- Advocating for the inclusion of miscarriage in population surveys
- Submitting evidence to the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation in England and the Wales Assurance Assessment into Maternity and Neonatal Services
- Attending and speaking at the All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Baby Loss, Black Maternal Health and Maternity and Patient Safety, which all submitted evidence to the English investigation

The JPU data hub

What is it?

The microsite is home to policy insight, briefings and consultation responses and now also a dedicated data hub. The data hub brings together baby mortality rates, care provision and issues facing health systems so everyone can see the evidence behind Sands' campaigning work and that of the JPU.

It's a critical tool for decision-makers, professionals and the public to track key metrics relevant to saving babies' lives and tackling inequality.

Why does it matter?

The JPU uses this data to identify where progress is stalling and challenge governments, holding them to account on their commitment to save babies' lives.

This year

New interactive 'featured charts' take a deep dive into topics, unpacking the data and connecting it to progress and what more there is to do. The data hub was viewed 686 times.



Reducing inequalities in maternity and neonatal care

Together, we're making care safer and fairer for everyone

The Maternity Consortium: Safer, more equitable care for babies and families for years to come

After five years, the Maternity Consortium, co-led by Sands and Tommy's, concluded its work as the government's Health and Wellbeing Alliance and came to an end.

Established in 2021, the consortium brought together organisations committed to improving maternity and neonatal safety, including Five X More, Muslim Women Network UK, National Maternity Voices and members of the Pregnancy and Babies Charities Network, to understand and reduce inequalities in maternity and neonatal care.

Understanding inequalities
Workshops and webinars exploring inequalities across maternity and neonatal care, from access to care and mental health services to digital exclusion and communication barriers, created a substantial evidence base to inform ongoing system improvement. While the experiences of women and birthing people, including those experiencing social vulnerability, continue to help inform national understanding of where care is falling short.

Turning learning into support
The Maternity Consortium provided a national platform for voluntary organisations, bereaved families and healthcare professionals to share insight, evidence and expertise with policymakers and NHS bodies that plan, fund and run maternity and neonatal services in England.



Making an impact in our final year

Bringing lived experience into national investigations
We brought parents' voices to the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation (NMNI) to deepen understanding of systemic and structural issues. Eight Family Panels ensured people with diverse lived experience informed national understanding and recommendations.

Alongside the Family Panels, two thematic evidence sessions gave organisations space to share what they were seeing across maternity and neonatal care, identify challenges and explore potential solutions.

Building the case for better translation support
Our review and subsequent report into barriers to language interpreting services was cited in a research application for a project analysing the use of digital translation tools, including within maternity services. Digital translation tools offer an opportunity to reduce linguistic barriers to care but must be designed carefully and evaluated for their impact.

Putting maternity and neonatal care into pandemic planning
Evidence provided to Exercise Pegasus (an exercise in pandemic preparedness) led to maternity and neonatal services being recognised as one of the four areas in health and adult social care that experienced the greatest harm from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NHS England will review protocols for maternity and neonatal services to ensure they can respond and adapt in the event of a pandemic, while maintaining safe and compassionate care for women, babies and families.

Leaving a legacy of change for babies and families

While the consortium has ended, its work will continue to drive change. The learning, evidence and lived experience gathered will remain central to national priorities and be drawn on by the new National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce in England.

The taskforce brings together families, NHS leaders, academics and voluntary sector organisations to urgently address inequalities in line with recommendations from the Baroness Amos independent investigation into maternity and neonatal services.

Through its work, the insight and experiences the Maternity Consortium has collated over the past five years will continue to shape safer, more equitable care for babies and families for years to come.

The resources developed by the consortium are also available on the JPU microsite, so learning and evidence can continue to be accessed and used.

Helping put health equity at the forefront of maternity investigations

Sands is contributing to the development of tools by the Maternity and Newborn Safety Investigation (MNSI) programme team that will strengthen recommendations to NHS trusts on how to make care safer and fairer for families.

Since the Sands Listening Project shone a spotlight on some of the systemic barriers faced by Black and Asian bereaved parents throughout their care, we've been contributing parents' voices to the team's work.

The MNSI programme carries out independent investigations into serious maternity and newborn safety events. And where relevant, it makes safety recommendations to improve services at local level and across the whole maternity and newborn healthcare system in England.

The Health Equity Assessment and Resource Toolkit (HEART) and Health Equity Warning Score (HEWS) tool have been designed to help the team identify and analyse health and social inequalities. Alongside the team's work, Sands will continue to ensure parents' experiences are recognised, understood and reflected in recommendations to make care equal for everyone.

Supporting all parents to get answers after their baby dies

Information about reviews and investigations after a baby has died is now easier for families to find. Bereaved parents told us that it can be difficult to know their options because it depends on where they live and how their baby died. Now, six new resources are helping them understand whether they're eligible and how to take part.

The online resources, being shared by healthcare professionals, Sands staff and volunteers and appearing in online search results, have been accessed 600 times since autumn 2025, helping hundreds of parents begin to find answers and understanding.



Campaigning

Together, we're making our voices heard

Mobilising thousands of people to put baby loss on politicians' radars

10,632 supporters added their voices to Sands' campaigns by taking an e-action, such as signing a petition or emailing their MP

Over 40 cross-party MPs from across the UK spoke in the 2025 Baby Loss Awareness Week (BLAW) debate in the House of Commons



Milestone win for parents

In June 2025, years of campaigning were reflected in the government's commitments on maternity and neonatal care in England.

Bereaved parents repeatedly tell us they share their experiences so other families don't have to face the same heartbreak and devastation. They want lessons to be learnt locally and for systemic issues to be addressed at national level.

Therefore we welcomed the announcement by the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting MP, that the new independent Maternity and Neonatal Safety Taskforce will:

- **include parent representatives**, ensuring families' experiences inform its work
- **introduce an anti-discrimination** programme to tackle inequalities in care for Black, Asian and other underserved communities

This is an important step forward after years of tireless campaigning by bereaved parents, alongside Sands, the Joint Policy Unit and many other organisations and allies working across maternity safety and baby loss.

Taking part in the meeting with Wes already shows me that there is hope for things to change, and I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to share my story with him. Sands and Wes have given me a voice to make a difference. We should be able to trust a system we all pay into - one that's meant to care for us at our most vulnerable. I truly hope this marks the beginning of real, lasting change.

Amber Lincoln, mum to Anaya and Mael and Sands Campaigner



While we were encouraged by these commitments, we were clear about what more needs to be done and, crucially, the need to track progress on the government's proposals to ensure they lead to meaningful change.

I welcome today's announcement from the Secretary of State. It's been rewarding to be part of the discussions with the government around improvements needed in bereavement care for Black families. Public acknowledgment and a clear plan to address the glaring disparities in baby loss are long overdue. Ensuring there is a clear focus on inequalities is something I've advocated for years.

I'll continue to hold the government accountable as the months progress. This isn't just about preventing more Black babies dying but honouring all the Black babies that we have already lost.

Rachel Burrell,
Sands Campaigner



We hope that the announcement to deliver an anti-discrimination programme to tackle inequalities in care for Black, Asian and other underserved communities is the start of much-needed work to tackle the inequalities in baby loss. This programme must be co-created with bereaved parents and importantly be the catalyst for a much wider, comprehensive, cross-government approach to this important issue, which addresses the varied factors that can contribute to inequalities in maternal and perinatal health outcomes.

Clea Harmer, Chief Executive at Sands

Putting parents' voices at the heart of national investigations

Sands made a substantive submission to the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation in England calling for a whole-system reform of maternity, neonatal and bereavement care.

Family Panels and significant online and in-person evidence-gathering put families' experiences in front of the investigation to make sure inequality in care was recognised and bereavement care would not be overlooked in subsequent reports and recommendations.

We also made sure the voices of bereaved families were heard as part of the All-Wales Maternity and Neonatal Assurance Assessment.

Keeping up the political pressure for all parents

As Secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss (APPG), Sands continues to keep baby loss on the parliamentary agenda alongside cross-party MPs. With a shared commitment to save babies' lives, we continue to develop policies and push for change.

From recognising the challenges and opportunities in maternity and bereavement policy to advocating in Parliament for better support for bereaved families and drawing on evidence from experts and stakeholders, we continue to fight the corner for bereaved families and expectant parents.

Baby Loss Awareness Week debate 2025

Securing the Health Secretary's attention on baby loss

Baby Loss Awareness Week provided a national platform on which to build political attention and momentum for change. Jointly secured by the APPGs on Baby Loss, Maternity and Patient Safety, the annual baby loss debate saw 40 MPs stay in the House of Commons past midnight, sharing their own stories of baby loss and telling of their constituents' experiences. Bereaved parents watched the debate from the gallery.

The debate was an unusual opportunity to put baby loss directly before the person with the power to influence change across the NHS, as The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP responded to the debate – the first time a health and social care secretary has attended such a debate.

The then-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care took part in discussions and responded to concerns. While the Prime Minister acknowledged the importance of the debate at Prime Minister's Questions the following week and thanked speakers for sharing their 'powerful and moving stories'.

Marking the week across UK nations

In Wales, we held a roundtable in the Senedd with cross-party MPs, campaigners and Sands staff to discuss baby loss in Wales. The minister responsible for maternity care also attended an event at a bereavement suite in Cardiff. While in Northern Ireland, the Departments of Health and Finance marked Baby Loss Awareness Week with Sands volunteers. Jemma Dolan MLA held a ribbon display with local Sands group, North Down Sands, and Harry Harvey MLA made a statement marking BLAW.

Putting evidence in front of decision-makers to drive safer, better care

This year, Sands' representatives took bereaved families' experiences and views to APPGs on Baby Loss, Black Maternal Health, Maternity and Patient Safety. They shared stories of heartbreak, loss and missed opportunities to save babies' lives. Together, they put powerful proof before decision-makers developing policies that could bring about safer maternity care and better bereavement care services.

Pushing for better mental health care after baby loss

Only

1 in 6

bereaved parents across the UK who need NHS mental health support can access it.

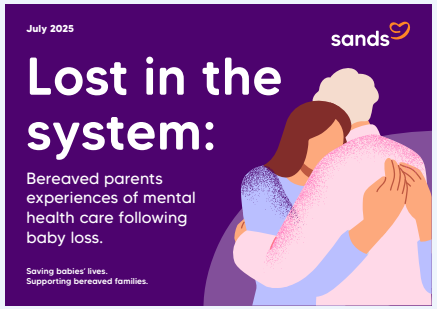
81%

of bereaved parents wanted mental health support but only 17% of those were able to access it through the NHS. Half said they couldn't access any at all.

More than a quarter of parents across the UK told us they had to pay privately to access mental health support.

Sands has called for urgent action from governments and NHS bodies across the UK to end the postcode lottery for mental health care for parents and families after their baby has died.

Lost in the System, a report compiled by Sands, revealed that thousands of grieving parents are being let down by a fragmented and unequal system of mental health care.



Stark inequalities in support

Many parents told us they felt shut out of services, abandoned or unsupported by the system. Fathers and partners spoke of their grief going unrecognised, with many expected to take on a supporting role.

Our review of the care available confirms these gaps. Across the UK, many areas have no provision for fathers and partners, despite them experiencing the same heartbreak and loss.

We also uncovered unacceptable disparities in the support received by Black and South Asian families. Parents described stereotyping when advocating for their care, language barriers and being referred for therapy that failed to meet their needs. LGBTQIA+ families told us about a lack of understanding. For many parents, poor care following their baby's death had led to a loss of trust in NHS services.

> **I felt that I was forgotten about, and everything was designed for my wife. I was just left to deal with my thoughts and feelings by myself, which caused great stress in my life.**
>
> **A bereaved father whose baby died during birth**

> **I was told over and over again that the lists were too long or there wasn't capacity for me to access this type of support. I was turned away from multiple organisations and all NHS options.**
>
> **A bereaved mother whose baby was stillborn**

I have depression and PTSD. I haven't been able to return to work since. I cry every day. I have had suicidal thoughts. I've needed sleeping tablets. I do receive half pay. I no longer speak to my family.

A woman who lost her baby during pregnancy

A postcode lottery across the UK

England

86%

of commissioners told us there was a specialist service in their area

Scotland

29%

of local health bodies said no specialist service exists

Wales

28.5%

of local health bodies confirmed a specialist service in their area

Northern Ireland

40%

of local health bodies said there was such a service – the same number said they didn't exist

Calling for urgent change

While recent changes, particularly in England, are helping some parents find the support they need, we're very clear that change must happen across every nation: All bereaved parents must have access to the support they need, when they need it and for as long as they need it – no matter where they live or who they are.

We're calling for national standards in England and Scotland to help end the postcode lottery in care; for the Cardiff and Vale pilot pathway to be evaluated and specialist mental health care extended across every Health Board area in Wales, and for perinatal mental health services in Northern Ireland to include a specialist pathway for bereaved parents.

Lost in the System sets out recommendations for governments, commissioners and NHS services, including national standards, better training for healthcare professionals and closer integration of maternity, neonatal and mental health services.

We now need real commitment from governments across the UK to strengthen and expand mental health services which support bereaved parents. This is not just about funding – it's about awareness, joined-up care and recognising that baby loss is a trauma. Mental health support should not be a luxury for bereaved parents – it's a necessity.

Charities like Sands do an excellent job of providing bereavement support but what we offer is not a replacement for the kind of specialist mental health services these parents tell us they so desperately need.

Clea Harmer, Chief Executive at Sands

1,000+

Sands campaigners and supporters

contacted their elected representatives across all four UK nations, calling on them to take action and urging their governments to engage with Sands.

Supporting change that recognises every baby lost in Northern Ireland

Sands made sure as many parents as possible had their say on the government's plans to introduce the Baby Loss Certificate and Miscarriage Leave in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Finance Minister John O'Dowd and Health Minister Mike Nesbitt launched a public consultation in June 2025 seeking the views of parents whose baby died before 24 weeks of pregnancy, and we urged bereaved parents to take part.

Recognising the comfort the certificates bring to so many families, we actively engaged throughout the process, bringing parents' experiences into meetings and stakeholder events and submitting a formal charity response.

Kelly Barnes, bereaved mum and Sands Northern Ireland volunteer, spoke at the consultation launch in Stormont.

> **As a bereaved parent myself, of 11 babies that were under 24 weeks, you often feel like they're forgotten, because your losses were earlier.**
>
> **So the fact that this public consultation is taking place gives parents the chance to share their views. To show what parents want is being taken into consideration - that's vital in relation to implementing the baby loss certificates. Parents just want to be heard.**



Sands volunteer Kelly Barnes, Health Minister Mike Nesbitt , Finance Minister John O'Dowd and Sands volunteer Rachel McGonigle at the launch of the consultation on a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme.

Building political backing for better care in Scotland

In Scotland, ahead of the May 2026 Scottish Parliament elections, we sought commitment from all political parties to guarantee safe, equitable care for everyone.

38 candidates signed our pledge.

> **I commit to working towards a future where fewer babies die, and all bereaved parents in Scotland get the care and support they need.**

This support has helped build a network of political allies to champion change for families across Scotland.



Bereaved parents challenging for change in Wales

More than 1,000 families in Wales may have seen their babies grow up if stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates had been the same as the best-performing countries in Europe between 2019 and 2023.

The Sands Wales Campaigner group called for the next Welsh government and all Welsh political parties to set and deliver against clear targets to reduce stillbirths and the number of babies dying shortly after birth. The group, made up of bereaved parents, also demanded safer maternity care in Wales be made a priority.

Babies in Wales are more likely to be stillborn than in the rest of the UK, and there has been little sustained progress in reducing the rate of newborn babies dying. Yet the Welsh government has failed to set the targets needed to drive progress and save parents the devastation of losing their baby.

Despite this higher risk, many parents are also left to cope without specialist support when their baby dies and in the weeks and months that follow. Some communities don't get the right support, and regional inequalities leave families in rural areas struggling to get any support at all.

Since coming together in 2024, the group has become a vehicle for change and launched its latest campaign demanding accountability during Baby Loss Awareness Week 2025.

While some campaigning activity in Wales had to stop this year because of an upcoming election in May 2026, the dedicated group used this political moment to ramp up engagement with candidates and raise awareness of pregnancy and baby loss.

The campaign began with an online petition and laid the groundwork for continued engagement with members of the Senedd after the election, to drive change for babies yet to be born across Wales.

Every day across Wales, there are mothers leaving hospitals without their babies. Families, like mine and many others, face the devastation of a life so different to the one they had planned. This is more likely to happen to a woman in Wales than in any other UK nation. I believe that we deserve better.

For far too long, our maternity care in Wales has been in crisis, with frontline staff pushed to their limits and families not listened to. We refuse to allow the wall of silence and excuses to stay upright any longer.

Ruth Mason, mum to twin boys George and Henry who were stillborn together in 2018, and parent campaigner

Campaign highlights

- **122 candidates signed our election pledge, including the leaders of the Green Party Wales and Welsh Conservatives, and the health spokesperson for Plaid Cymru**
- **Welsh political party, and now leaders of the Welsh Government Plaid Cymru, pledged to action in their manifesto: 'If elected, Plaid Cymru have committed to developing and strengthening Wales's National Bereavement Care Pathway, and promoting best practice on supporting parents and families affected by baby loss'**
- **Bereaved parent campaigners met local candidates and secured their support for our campaign**



Campaigning close to home

Regional campaign groups in Sheffield, Cambridge and Lewisham are driving the changes that matter most to bereaved families in their local area.

The groups were established after parents told us that the changes they want to see need to happen locally and can't always be achieved through national policy. Ensuring local trusts, health boards and others follow policies and guidelines in hospitals and across local services is critically important to parents.

The local campaign groups are already making a difference, securing more specialist bereavement staff, training and facilities for families.

Lewisham Local Campaign
Advocacy meetings with Lewisham Hospital's Midwifery Leadership Team resulted in two important changes: the Bereavement Midwife role was increased from four to five days a week and additional bereavement training for midwives began.

The campaign also secured media coverage when it first shared its survey findings and built strong working relationships with the Southeast London Integrated Care Board and the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership. This laid the groundwork for the full campaign report published in July 2026.

> **As a bereaved parent, I know how important good bereavement care is when you're at your most vulnerable. When Lewisham residents spoke about their experiences at the hospital, I felt strongly about improving those experiences.**
>
> **I went from being a Befriender to a Campaigner, and so many parents have joined the call for better bereavement care as part of the Lewisham Campaign. We won't stop until we know bereaved parents have the care they deserve.**
>
> **Rachel Burrell, Sands Campaigner**

> **When my daughter was stillborn at 36 weeks, the care and compassion we were shown by all the staff at the hospital made a huge difference. So many details - from the clinical decisions made to the words the staff used - are etched on my memory all these years later. I feel very fortunate that none of those words or actions made the pain of losing our daughter any worse, and in many cases are part of the positive memories we were able to make with her. Hearing that so many bereaved parents at Lewisham haven't been afforded the same care that we received elsewhere was heartbreaking, and I'm proud to be involved in the Sands campaign to change that.**
>
> **Katy Heald, Sands Campaigner**

Cambridge Local Campaign
Concerns about unsuitable bereavement facilities and lack of mental health services at the Rosie Hospital in Cambridge, raised by Sands Hospital Liaison Volunteer Kym Field, led to a group of bereaved parents coming together to campaign for better care.

The campaign group ran a survey over the summer of 2025, which found that the bereavement rooms did not meet parents' needs and that the hospital lacked specialist bereavement capacity and spaces.

After developing a campaign strategy, the parents successfully engaged with local MPs and held regular meetings with senior leadership at the hospital. Through the group's advocacy, the campaign has secured funding to renovate the existing bereavement rooms and improve care pathways for bereaved parents. The hospital has also hired a new bereavement midwife and committed to further bereavement care training.

Local parents are now working with the Director of Midwifery to continue improving bereavement care at the Rosie Hospital.

Sheffield Local Campaign
Megan Jones-Davies, a Sands Hospital Liaison Volunteer, sparked the campaign after identifying inconsistent care for bereaved parents at Sheffield Hospital.

Sands then supported a group of local bereaved parents to come together to call for additional bereavement midwife capacity, better mental health care for people following pregnancy loss and further bereavement care training for staff.

After launching a report in the summer of 2025 on the experiences of bereaved parents accessing support across South Yorkshire, the campaign is making the case for better care at Sheffield Hospital to local health leaders and community stakeholders.

Already the group have secured additional follow-up contact for bereaved parents after their baby has died, a new early loss bereavement nurse role and better training for the bereavement team and midwives.

The campaign group continues to advocate for funding for an additional bereavement midwife and specialist mental health services for people following baby loss.

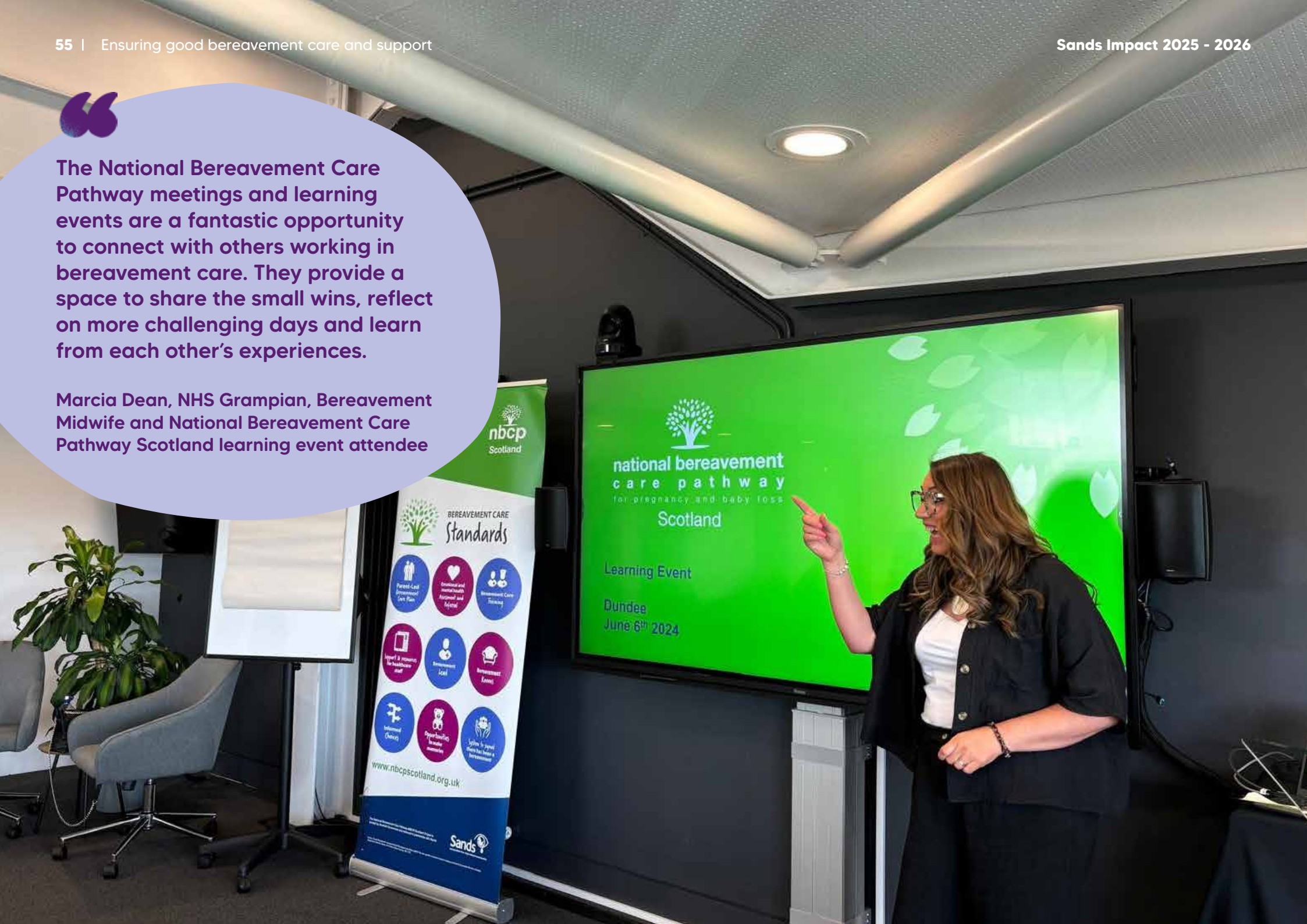


3 Ensuring good bereavement care and support



The National Bereavement Care Pathway meetings and learning events are a fantastic opportunity to connect with others working in bereavement care. They provide a space to share the small wins, reflect on more challenging days and learn from each other's experiences.

Marcia Dean, NHS Grampian, Bereavement Midwife and National Bereavement Care Pathway Scotland learning event attendee



Supporting families

Together, we're there for every family when they need support

Many of the parents and families we support tell us that connecting with Sands makes a significant difference to how they feel. And asking for feedback on their experience with Sands is one way we learn and keep improving our services to make sure everyone gets support that's right for them.

Average improvement in wellbeing

Before Sands support session:	After Sands support session:
5.47/10	7.47/10



In-person and online support for anyone grieving a baby

- An average of 2,412 bereaved parents, families and people facing life after baby loss found support through our Facebook support groups every month
- An average of 126 parents whose baby has died received peer-to-peer support through our online community every month
- 6,237 parents and family members were supported by our email support team
- 1,783 people spoke to someone about their loss via our telephone helpline

Accessible support for families wherever they live

- 84 support group meetings across the UK every month provided families with face-to-face peer support
- 350 trained Befrienders ensured emotional peer support was available by phone, in-person and online
- 121 Hospital Liaison Volunteers advocated for improved bereavement care locally
- 35 Sands United football clubs (SUFC) gave dads a safe space to talk about their loss with people who understand

Resources helping families through every stage of grief

- 16,823 bereavement support books requested covering every stage of the grief journey
- 2,731 Memory and Muslim Care Boxes sent to families to capture precious memories and keep them safe
- 865 support booklets provided to parents long ago bereaved
- 4,090 hand and footprint kits helping parents create keepsakes they can hold on to
- 473 Tracing a Baby's Grave booklets shared with parents whose babies died long ago



Feedback from those who found support through Sands helpline

> **The support I have received from Sands has been a lifesaver; to be able to understand baby grief and help my daughter at this heartbreaking time is invaluable.**

> **I have never felt more heard and understood. Thank God for this amazing service and the people who run it. Thank you.**

> **Sands was my comfort blanket in the early days of grief; I got through some of the hardest days because of being able to feel not alone with Sands.**

Helping bereaved parents prioritise self-care

The Sands Wellbeing Box launched in October in time for World Mental Health Day, is giving parents a gentle prompt and small, manageable ways to take care of themselves while they're grieving.

The box was co-created with bereaved parents, so every item inside helps bring a moment of relief. Because we know grief affects the whole body, we also chose the contents to bring physical and emotional comfort. Each specially selected item offers parents a way to take time for themselves, whether lighting a candle, planting some wildflower seeds, having a cup of peppermint tea or even writing a note to their baby.

Sands Wellbeing Box is available to order at letterboxgifts.co.uk.



> **We have put together this beautiful wellbeing box with bereaved parents and Letterbox Gifts. It contains special items to help reduce anxiety and take some time for self-care. Often friends, family or colleagues want to do something practical to help, and sending a wellbeing box is an ideal way to show that you care.**
>
> **Rowena Pailing, Head of Bereavement Support Services at Sands**

> **A friend of mine sadly had a miscarriage last week. It was really helpful to have the Wellbeing Box available from Sands that I could send, without having to research what might be appropriate. Knowing that the contents had been developed by those with experience of pregnancy loss meant I felt confident in sending it.**
>
> **Aimee, who purchased a Sands Wellbeing Box**

Leading the way to drive improvements in bereavement care across the UK

Together, we're ensuring every family receives compassionate, high-quality care wherever they live and however their baby dies

Gold-standard bereavement care embedded in NHS plans

After years of leading the development and adoption of the National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP), this year marked a major milestone for Sands and the bereaved families, healthcare and charity partners who are part of this transformational work.

In October 2025, NHS England recognised the importance of high-quality bereavement care by including Stillbirth and Neonatal Death pathways in its Medium Term Planning Framework for improving maternity and neonatal services in England.

Embedding the pathways in NHS plans is a major step towards making high-quality, personalised bereavement care a reality for everyone whose baby dies. Crucially, it signals immediate action to transform bereavement support and ensures women and partners are heard when it matters most.

These pathways combine practical guidance for staff with standards of care, culture and behaviour across maternity and neonatal care settings. That means every parent can expect compassionate care, whether through access to bereavement rooms, memory-making opportunities or referral to timely emotional and psychological care.

> **Having the bereavement care standards and the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death National Bereavement Care Pathways embedded in NHS England guidance is a major milestone in ensuring everyone touched by pregnancy or baby loss gets the high-quality and accessible bereavement care they need.**
>
> **Sands will continue to lead and drive improvements in bereavement care with the NHS and our partners to help embed the NBCP and make sure it is effective and makes a difference to all bereaved parents.**
>
> **Clea Harmer, Chief Executive at Sands**

> **The voice and experiences of bereaved families have been vital in recognising the importance and value of high-quality bereavement care and the lasting impact this can have. Real experiences are at the heart of the NBCP, and we're thankful to those who have bravely shared their experiences to impact positive change. Your experiences and insights will now shape the bereavement care of the future.**
>
> **Dr Rebecca Ashley, National Bereavement Care Pathway Manager, England at Sands**



Continuing to build on strong foundations
Alongside this achievement, Sands, together with several baby loss charities, Royal Colleges, parent groups, professional bodies, parent and family groups, local hospitals, trusts, and boards, continues to strengthen bereavement care through the NBCP across the UK.

England

- 128 NHS trusts have committed to adopting bereavement care standards.

Scotland

- All 14 health boards continue to implement the NBCP Standards and to engage with the support provided by Sands for learning opportunities and peer support. The NBCP guidance is embedded within the Health Improvement Scotland Maternity Standards and the Scottish Government Miscarriage Delivery Framework.

Wales and Northern Ireland

- Standards and pathways continue to be developed following listening and engagement events. The events gave healthcare professionals and bereaved parents the chance to share their views, experiences and stories ensuring all developments are informed by lived experience and clinical insight. Roll-out of standards and pathways will take place in 2026-2027.

Creating opportunities for healthcare professionals to reflect, learn and deliver the best care possible

This year we continued to deliver opportunities for healthcare professionals to learn from good practice and understand where care could be improved so the next family has a better experience.

More than 1,000 professionals working across all five National Bereavement Care Pathways for Pregnancy and Baby Loss took part in workshops and learning events that gave them the space to reflect on their experiences and put learning into practice. The pathways cover miscarriage, ectopic and molar pregnancy; termination of pregnancy for fetal anomaly; stillbirth; neonatal death and sudden unexpected death in infancy up to 24 months.

Having the opportunity to meet with colleagues from many disciplines across the NHS and third sector to learn and share is a privilege. These events are so important to ensure that parents' voices are heard and we're able to act on them. The opportunity to both attend and speak at sessions has widened my knowledge and enabled us to improve our service.

Healthcare professional and NBCP learning event attendee

I always find the networking events very useful as we're able to hear from other Health Boards about what they are doing differently and we learn from each other.

Healthcare professional and NBCP Scotland event attendee

We have got to know each other over the years and we feel that we can ask each other anything. It's a great resource to have other health professionals to go to. Sue, National Bereavement Care Pathway Scotland Manager, is always a great source of knowledge and if she doesn't know something, she'll find out for us and always with a smile on her face.

Lindsay Canavan, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Bereavement Midwife and NBCP Scotland learning event attendee

I would like to thank you for hosting an amazing workshop in Brighton on Thursday; the networking along with your advice has proven invaluable so I will be taking a lot back to my line manager to improve our service, especially around training which has sadly been pulled from the mandatory study days.

Healthcare professionals and NBCP Brighton workshop attendee

Many thanks for today's session and for sending through the slides; a really informative session and great to hear direct from NBCP partners.

Healthcare professional and NBCP Northern Ireland learning session attendee

Thank you so much for this. I will share this with our Paediatric Palliative Care Nurse Specialist as we were unaware of the depth of your service.

Healthcare professional and NBCP Northern Ireland learning session attendee

Thank you, that was really informative and so compassionately delivered. It's really good to know where to refer to or where to access services.

Healthcare professional and NBCP Northern Ireland learning session attendee

Supporting consistent, compassionate care across Wales

In Wales, we worked with bereaved families, healthcare staff and our partners Miscarriage UK, ARC, Tŷ Hafan and 2wish to develop the National Bereavement Care Pathway for Wales.

Professional development groups brought together expertise from across Wales, while extensive consultation helped us understand what families and staff needed from the pathways and the resources supporting them. As a result, the pathways were rewritten and finalised to reflect the Welsh health system and the experiences of bereaved families.

We also developed dedicated online Padlets to bring the pathways, guidance and practical resources together in one accessible place for healthcare staff. It means that as the pathways move towards rollout, staff will have both clear standards for bereavement care and practical support to help put them into practice.

This work has created the foundations for a more consistent approach to high-quality, compassionate bereavement care across Wales, shaped from the outset by the people who will use the pathways and the families whose care they are designed to improve.



Preparing for better bereavement care across Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, we worked with bereaved parents, health and social care staff and partner organisations to lay the foundations for the first National Bereavement Care Pathway tailored to the Northern Ireland health system.

A Parent Advisory Group was established to ensure bereaved families' experiences shaped the work from the outset, while hospital visits and engagement with staff across the region helped us understand current practice, challenges and what would be needed to support implementation.

We also created new opportunities for staff to learn and connect. Lunchtime learning sessions shared pathway-specific guidance, good practice and information about local and national support for bereaved families, while two regional multidisciplinary study days brought together staff from all five health and social care trusts. These sessions focused on trauma-informed practice, inclusive communication, staff wellbeing, bereavement care standards and ensuring parent voice is reflected in care.

The launch of the NBCP Northern Ireland newsletter also created a regular way to share progress, resources and learning with staff across the region.

Together, this work built stronger relationships across Northern Ireland, increased awareness of good bereavement care and ensured the pathways and supporting resources reflect the needs of the healthcare professionals who will use them and the bereaved families they support.

Delivering more accessible bereavement care training to healthcare professionals

Healthcare staff can now access Sands education resources more readily through a digital platform called Padlet. The easy-to-use platform provides online spaces for written resources, images, video and audio clips, providing a central hub for learning. Forty platforms host interactive, engaging resources to help professionals deliver the highest quality bereavement care. Plus all six bereavement care resource toolkits are now hosted on the platform, making them easier to navigate and supporting more consistent use across services.



Championing compassionate workplaces for anyone grieving the loss of a baby

New training opportunities, part of Sands Bereavement in the Workplace programme, are helping bereaved employees find greater understanding when they return to work after their baby has died.

Going back to work after the death of a baby is incredibly difficult and can feel daunting. Through the programme, we're helping employers create environments where bereaved colleagues are met with compassion and managers have the knowledge, confidence and practical tools to recognise and respond to employees' grief in the right way.

A newly introduced series of Sands Awareness Talks is helping more managers and colleagues know what to do and say when someone is grieving. The series includes four talks: Memory Making and Commemoration, Supporting Men after Loss, Finding the Words and Wellbeing with Guided Meditation.

Led by Sands' specialist trainers and staff, the sessions are encouraging teams to talk openly about baby loss and helping colleagues approach conversations with sensitivity and understanding.

More sensitive support for families planning their baby's funeral

New training resources are helping funeral directors and crematoria staff provide the compassionate, sensitive care bereaved parents need as they make heart-wrenching decisions about their baby's funeral.

A series of webinars, informed by parents and delivered by Sands, are giving staff a better understanding of individual experiences of pregnancy and baby loss, what matters most to parents at this time and the language staff can use to help families feel supported. The sessions are also an opportunity to let staff know about our support so they can help parents find Sands.

Understanding how parents might be feeling, and feeling confident doing and saying the right thing, can be difficult. So our support for funeral directors and their staff is ongoing, making sure parents feel understood as they decide how to say goodbye to their baby.

> **Yes, this webinar has helped me. I didn't know about the Sands Memory Boxes and all the support available for families. It was helpful to be reminded that I can tell parents when I'm not sure about something, and signpost them to Sands, or find out and let them know.**
>
> Webinar attendee

Bridging the gap to better bereavement care

Hospital Liaison Volunteers (HLVs) continued to be a vital bridge between Sands and healthcare professionals at their local hospitals, with 32 new volunteers taking on the role this year.

An incredible 121 trained volunteers are now helping make sure parents and families find the compassionate support they deserve after their baby has died – in that moment and as they learn to live with their loss.

> **I'm delighted to have been able to introduce Sands leaflets and posters into the bereavement suite where previously there were none.**
>
> Emma Taylor, Hospital Liaison Volunteer at Salisbury District Hospital

> **The bereavement midwife let me know that she's really happy to meet someone from an Asian background doing this role; the hospital is in need of this.**
>
> Shazmin Zafar, Hospital Liaison Volunteer at Bradford Royal Infirmary

Reaching parents with Sands' support
Ensuring hospital teams have Sands resources to share with bereaved parents and can signpost to local Sands support

Connecting staff with training
Promoting Sands bereavement training, resources and guidance for multidisciplinary teams



HLVs:

Connecting Sands, hospitals and bereaved families

Improving bereavement care locally
Encouraging consistent implementation of pathway standards across hospital departments, including memory-making opportunities, supporting cultural and faith-based bereavement care and ensuring resources are available across maternity and neonatal services

Sharing parents' voices to shape services
Taking bereaved families' experiences and insights to hospital teams

Putting exceptional bereavement care in the spotlight

Together, we're inspiring the kind of care that changes how families experience baby loss

Celebrating an extraordinary commitment to bereaved families

Janine Dougan, then Midwife and Health Visitor in Northern Ireland, was the incredibly worthy winner of this year's Elaine Thorp Award for Bereavement Care.

Janine's care for Victoria and Thomas when their daughter Alexa died reflects the kind of compassionate, personalised bereavement support Elaine Thorp championed throughout her career.

A legacy of exceptional bereavement care

Midwife Elaine Thorp personified good bereavement care and was a true pioneer in listening to bereaved parents. Elaine first became aware of the need for better care in the late 1970s and joined Sands in 1991, becoming Bereavement Officer at Birmingham Women's Hospital.

Elaine retired from the NHS in 2007 and sadly died in 2013. However, she left behind a very special legacy of care that lives on through many midwives, nurses and other health professionals who recognise that the care a family receives in those precious moments a baby dies can shape how they live with their grief for years to come.



When Victoria and Thomas's baby daughter, Alexa, was diagnosed with Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia (CDH) four years ago during pregnancy, Health Visitor Janine was by their side through the devastating diagnosis and painful loss that followed.

> **Janine never judged me even when I felt insane from grief. She made sure I was always supported by professionals I knew... Janine is like a fairy godmother... she made me feel so supported and cared for at a time when my world was crumbling... Janine helped me for years to rebuild my life after losing my daughter.**
>
> **Janine acknowledges me as a mother of 4 instead of the 3 most people see.**
>
> **Victoria, bereaved parent**

> **Janine realised men grieve too... she'd always make me and my grief feel seen. She'd offer me support but never pressured me... Janine was about the only healthcare professional that seen I was a grieving parent and not just the partner of a grieving mother... When she called it felt like a friendly relative would come and brighten the day in even the worst of times. How could we ever thank someone for such outstanding dedication, support and love?**
>
> **Thomas, bereaved parent**

Janine went above and beyond for the young family, making time for extra visits at home, recommending local counselling services and other support in their area, including a dad's walking group, and connecting Victoria and Thomas with Sands. Crucially, she recognised Thomas as a bereaved father and grieving parent, not simply as a partner.

Since then, Janine has stayed alongside Victoria and Thomas through subsequent pregnancies, losses and the birth of their two sons. Now retired, Janine still marks their daughter's birthday by sending a message to Alexa's mum and dad.

> **Losing a child is unbearable, no matter at what stage. Providing good bereavement care is essential so parents know that they're supported and cared for and that their baby mattered and their wishes were respected. It's about being their partner in this process and being present for them.**
>
> **As a health visitor, you are also in the position to support and nurture that family if they decide to have another child after their loss; you're uniquely placed by being in their home and knowing their story.**
>
> **Janine**



All the Elaine Thorp Award for Bereavement Care nominations were submitted by bereaved parents and family members, giving them an important opportunity to thank the healthcare professionals who cared for them and their babies. I hope this Award will shine a light on the difference that so many health care workers are making for bereaved parents every day.

Caring well for someone who has just been told their baby has died takes a unique combination of communication, compassion, patience and really listening to what parents' needs and wishes are. By holding that space and striving to truly understand their needs at this moment of overwhelming grief and shock, health care professionals can make a positive difference to bereaved parents and families.

We received just under 50 nominations for the Elaine Thorp Award but Janine truly stood out through her dedication to helping all those parents she cares for begin to rebuild their lives, and ensuring their baby's memory is at the heart of everything she does. Good care can't take away the pain of the death of a baby but can help parents through this devastating time.

Clea Harmer, Chief Executive of Sands



Equipping professionals and volunteers with the skills and knowledge they need

Leading the way in bereavement care education and training

Through specialist education and training, Sands is helping shape a healthcare workforce that is better equipped to support families affected by pregnancy and baby loss.

Our programmes - delivered by specialist trainers across all four UK nations - combine clinical best practice with the lived experiences of bereaved families. By bringing these together, our programmes help healthcare professionals build the knowledge, confidence and practical skills needed to deliver compassionate, equitable and evidence-based care. This means more families receive the understanding, dignity and support they need at a time of profound loss.

By influencing individual practice, multidisciplinary teams and organisational culture, Sands' training contributes to sustainable improvements in bereavement care across the UK.

2,521

professionals reached with Sands specialist training

Average rating of Sands training

4.7/5



Taking Sands training to policy decision-makers

For the first time, we delivered training to people with the power to influence maternal health policy decisions. Traditionally, Sands training has been designed to support frontline health professionals caring for parents. This newly developed training creates a new route for Sands to influence maternal health policy, helping decision-makers understand what matters most to bereaved parents and what makes the biggest difference at one of the hardest times of their lives.

Helping researchers involve bereaved parents with care

Academics starting out in research to help save babies' lives can now access training that will equip them with the skills and confidence to engage sensitively with bereaved parents.

Parents bring considerable insight to research that could change the outcome for babies yet to be born, but reliving their experience is often painful. The new training module covers core principles and considerations to help researchers make sure parents feel comfortable, safe and supported sharing their story.

Strengthening learning across Sands

Newly developed training and education resources are giving healthcare professionals, volunteers and Sands staff access to learning in a way that works for them.

- All Training Leads are now skilled in e-learning software as well as traditional training resources and delivery.
- Befrienders now have a structured learning pathway that complements the lived experience they bring to the role. Three self-led e-learning modules and four live, trainer-led sessions take volunteers from initial learning through to ongoing development.
- Sands Training and Education established a relationship with those devising the new NHS Learning Hub to support bitesize learning on a range of bereavement care topics for release in 2026.

> **I was impressed with the deep focus on self-care throughout all the sessions, especially with the parent speaker session. And I was grateful for the vulnerability of everyone on the course to share their experiences; it really enriched the learning. Having two trainers helped the tech run seamlessly, and also they each brought a wealth of knowledge and experience.**
>
> **Attendee at Sands counsellor and therapist training**

> The webinar was a really emotive and insightful two hours, putting the families affected by loss at the centre. It was so useful for my own practice and has given me a lot to reflect on. Thank you to the trainer for being a great speaker!

Healthcare professional who attended Sands webinar: Supporting those going through perinatal loss in a healthcare setting

> This was a very good course for creating awareness and ways to help others, rather than avoiding the topic in case we feel we'll get it wrong. Very valuable, thank you, and helpful trainers too.

Professional working in a community setting who attended Sands webinar: Providing pregnancy and baby loss support in a community setting



> I thought it was great and digestible information. As a student midwife I appreciated that the webinar was open to all, so I could receive some information on how to deal with bereavement in a healthcare setting.

Student midwife who attended Sands webinar: Supporting those going through perinatal loss in a healthcare setting

4 Growing sustainably





I wanted to run The Great North Run for Sands because a couple of years ago we lost our daughter during pregnancy. We were gifted a wonderful memory box and had support and care from the Sands team which really helped us. So when the opportunity came, I couldn't wait to help to donate to such a wonderful cause. Thank you guys for what you have done for us as a family and also our baby Olivia.

Adam, bereaved dad, Sands supporter and fundraiser

Using every opportunity to raise awareness

Together, we're making pregnancy and baby loss impossible to ignore

We don't want anyone to feel isolated or alone if they're touched by pregnancy or baby loss. We want more people to understand that a baby dying isn't inevitable or 'just one of those things' - but that safer maternity care, more research and training can save babies' lives. And if someone does experience baby loss, everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, should be able to access the care and support they need.

That's why we speak out, and why we put the voices of the Sands community front and centre in our work. Real stories and experiences are what inspire our campaigns and media moments.

Gillian Owen, Head of Communications and Engagement at Sands



1,311

media mentions generating more than 3.2 billion opportunities for people across the UK to hear about Sands and our work

23 million



Sands' social media reach grew to more than 23 million people, a 26% increase from 2024-2025

Making men's experience of pregnancy and baby loss more visible

Ryan is one of the many bereaved parents supported by Sands to take part in a media interview to raise awareness of baby loss and the impact it has. Alongside Head of Bereavement Support, Rowena, who shared information about the impact of pregnancy and baby loss and the challenges men can face, Ryan spoke to Men's Health magazine about his experiences and why reaching out and connecting with Sands and Sands United helped him.

Features like this introduce Sands to people who might not know about us otherwise and help people understand they aren't alone if they've been touched by pregnancy and baby loss.

I think it's important, if you can, to speak out about the impact of pregnancy and baby loss. It happens to more people than you think. By sharing my experience I'm letting other men know it's okay to feel sad, angry, upset and a whole heap of other emotions. It's too easy to feel alone. Taking part in opportunities like having our experience of baby loss included in the Men's Health magazine is a way to reach even more men. If just one person reads it and then knows how to signpost their friend, brother or colleague to somewhere like Sands for support, or a bereaved dad sees it and feels understood, then I'm proud. Speaking out isn't always easy but with Sands, if you want to, you'll be supported.

Ryan, member of Sands United Glasgow









Bringing the power of Sands' community to the screen at Christmas

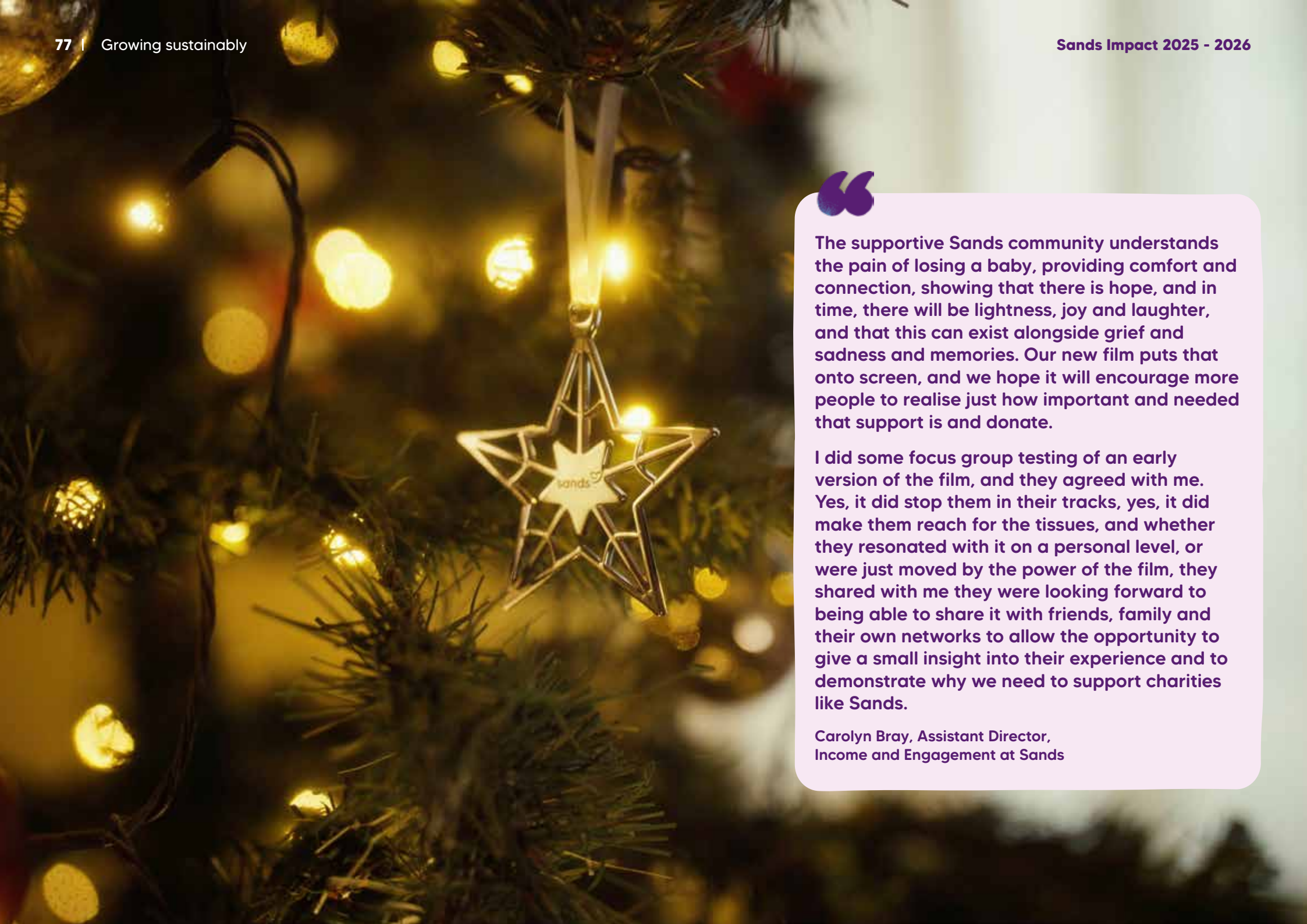
At the heart of this year's Christmas campaign were the families who tell us how difficult the time of year can be, especially when their baby isn't recognised in the same way as others no longer with us.

'I'll never forget you', the film at the centre of our Christmas message, was inspired by the heartfelt stories of babies gone but never forgotten - stories generously shared by the many parents who found support through Sands over the years.

Talented film producer Phil Beastall, whose work in 2018 – Love is a Gift – was a viral success, sensitively portrayed the deeply moving experience of a couple navigating Christmas and the life they didn't expect after losing their baby, and finding a community of understanding and support with Sands.

> **I hope that people who are experiencing a loss will be able to reflect that they're not alone. There is support out there for them. I hope that in that horrible moment, they might feel some comfort to know that they're not isolated with that situation. There's a real strong community aspect to this film to hopefully bring people together in a difficult time.**
>
> **Phil Beastall, Film Producer**

Watched more than 448,000 times, the film shone a light on the often-unspoken experiences of families missing much-loved babies at Christmas, encouraging conversations about baby loss, grief and remembrance.



The supportive Sands community understands the pain of losing a baby, providing comfort and connection, showing that there is hope, and in time, there will be lightness, joy and laughter, and that this can exist alongside grief and sadness and memories. Our new film puts that onto screen, and we hope it will encourage more people to realise just how important and needed that support is and donate.

I did some focus group testing of an early version of the film, and they agreed with me. Yes, it did stop them in their tracks, yes, it did make them reach for the tissues, and whether they resonated with it on a personal level, or were just moved by the power of the film, they shared with me they were looking forward to being able to share it with friends, family and their own networks to allow the opportunity to give a small insight into their experience and to demonstrate why we need to support charities like Sands.

Carolyn Bray, Assistant Director,
Income and Engagement at Sands



Baby Loss Awareness Week 2025

936 mentions of BLAW online, radio and TV

3.6 billion opportunities for messages of remembrance, support and change to be seen

62,000 visits to the BLAW Alliance website during October

More than **1 in 3** people have heard of BLAW

Once again, the week was a powerful focal point for remembrance, connection and change. Led by Sands, over 130 charities united through the Baby Loss Awareness Week Alliance, combining their voices and reach to put pregnancy and baby loss firmly in the spotlight.

Thousands of parents found ways to remember their precious babies, connected with others and took the conversation about baby loss into their communities, helping more people understand its impact and how to support those affected.

The Alliance in action

300+

events across the UK supporting families and offering a space to remember much-loved and forever missed babies

110+

buildings and landmarks illuminated pink and blue, including The Kelpies (Scotland), Alexandra Palace, Spinnaker Tower (Portsmouth), Durham Cathedral, Faraday Tower (Manchester) and Old Joe – the world's tallest freestanding clock tower in Birmingham

347

schools guidance packs downloaded, supporting teaching staff to sensitively take part in the week with pupils and recognise that baby loss affects siblings too







Across Sands' community, our supporters made Baby Loss Awareness Week (BLAW) count too, helping parents find comfort and connection where they live.

Jessica Burley gave families local to Beckenham a meaningful way to remember their babies during the week. Blue, pink and white ribbons bearing the names of babies forever loved and remembered hung from trees and railings around the town.

I wanted to create these special displays to remember all the babies lost, whether recently or long ago. I like the visual tribute to show others that these are all babies who aren't here and providing a place for people to come and add their own ribbon as an act of remembrance to bring them comfort. Sadly, pregnancy and baby loss affect families across the UK every day, and they may feel they are alone in their grief. I hope the displays raise awareness and break the silence.

Sands supporter, Jessica Burley



In Newcastle, a ribbon display created by bereaved auntie Kirsty Russell gave local parents a way to mark their love for babies who will forever be part of their families. The display of remembrance beside the Wings sculpture sat proudly on Newcastle promenade, making baby loss more visible in the community.

I wanted to create a special display to remember all the babies lost. I hope it starts conversations.

Sands supporter, Kirsty Russell

Sands' community in action

175

local volunteer events including ribbon displays, Wave of Light services and awareness stands

116

ribbon displays hosted by bereaved families reaching over 10,000 people

64

ribbon displays organised by Sands volunteer groups and Sands United Football Clubs



Spotlight on Sands Champions for Baby Loss Awareness Week

Record-breaking

88 Workplace Champions



More people than ever before got involved with BLAW 2025 through their work and over half joined us for the first time.

Dedicated Sands Champions for BLAW made baby loss hard to ignore, turning buildings, outfits, screensavers and more unmissable pink and blue. They sparked conversations amongst colleagues and in community spaces where they might not happen otherwise and raised vital funds to support Sands' work.

The growing community of businesses included Heathrow Airport, John Lewis & Partners Oxford Street and Balfour Beatty who lit up landmarks and workplaces.

Softcat: Championing BLAW

- Ribbon Run Partner
- Ribbon Runs across 7 offices
- Annual charity football match
- Marlow HQ lit pink and blue

Softcat is delighted and proud to support Baby Loss Awareness Week 2025 and the Ribbon Run. Our involvement underscores our ongoing commitment to addressing such an important topic and providing our colleagues with the space and security to share their experiences and talk about their losses. Together, we can foster an environment of understanding, support and healing.

Rebecca Bateman, IT PMO Manager and Family Network Co-Lead at Softcat

40,048



visitors to Sands website during BLAW - a 23% increase on the average number of visitors since 2021



2,822,670

people reached through Sands organic social media content during BLAW - a 38% increase on the average number of people reached since 2021

Say Their Name Day 2025

This year, Sands introduced a new day dedicated to saying and sharing the names and memories of babies who have died.

Many bereaved parents tell us that after their baby has died, they rarely hear their name said aloud because often people don't know what to say. So on 25 March, we encouraged parents to talk about their babies with those around them and invited them to tell us about them too.

Say Their Name Day has been supporting parents in Australia since 2019 and unites thousands of families in saying their babies' names and hearing it from others.



The expansion of the campaign internationally was a significant milestone for the organisation and for bereaved families. Say Their Name Day was created to ensure every baby is acknowledged and remembered, and to help families feel supported in speaking about their child. To see it extend overseas is incredibly humbling. It's a powerful reminder that the need to recognise and honour babies' lives is universal.

Our hope is that Say Their Name Day becomes the start of a global movement that encourages more open conversations about loss and leads to better bereavement support and care for families everywhere.

Amy Cooper, CEO of Red Nose Australia



“

After the initial days, I felt like I was expected to ‘move on’ and be happy again. And for some reason that meant people stopped mentioning Sophia’s name or remembering her with me. I realised I had to continue to say her name to keep her memory alive, more for myself than anyone else.

Just before Sophia’s second birthday we raised money and awareness for Say Their Name Day in Sydney. It was the first time I had one of those little tiles from Instagram with her name on it; it felt like I had a reason to share her name again, to say it out loud with other bereaved mums who must be aching to say their babies’ names.

I remember thinking, how simple it was, just a day to honour the ones who died. And how much significance it holds for someone who doesn’t get to hear that name.

I think one of the greatest fears of a bereaved parent is that their child will be forgotten. Maybe not so much by those around them, but that you might forget what they felt like, looked like, smelt like.

For every person that mentions Sophia by name instead of ‘that experience you have had’, they get a special place in my heart. For the love and respect they are showing my daughter.

[This day] carries so much more than just a name. It’s acknowledgement of an existence, of the everyday heartache and love that is carried forward after loss.

Naveen, Sophia’s mum and Sands supporter

Fundraising in focus: The highlights

Fundraising income

£8,500,000

Thousands of people turned their support into vital funds, bringing us closer to a future where fewer babies die and every bereaved family gets the care they need. We're incredibly grateful to every single one of you.

From parents who have experienced the heartbreak of baby loss, family and friends, to corporate partners, charitable funders and others who, like us, are committed to safer maternity services, better bereavement care and more support in their communities. Behind every penny and pound is an individual act of kindness that makes a meaningful difference.

Everyone has their own reason for standing with Sands – for many it's to make sure another family doesn't have to face the same devastating loss. Often, we hear that raising money with us is a way to honour a baby's life. For some, it's an important part of grieving; a way to connect with people who understand what they're going through. That's why we take the time to listen to our fundraisers and supporters, just as we do the parents we support, and we continually look for ways to make their experience the best it can be.

So we trial, test and learn. This year, new apps are helping event participants feel more connected and supported. Even more in-person and virtual events, including crafting and physical challenges, are giving people ways to help that work for them. While supporters organising their own fundraising now have more tools and resources to help make it a success.

Finding new ways to inspire people to get involved

A ribbon of remembrance and hope

The Sands Baby Loss Awareness Week Ribbon continues to be a powerful symbol of remembrance and solidarity, uniting thousands of people in memory of much-loved babies and shared hope for a world where fewer babies die.

This year, the BLAW ribbon helped more people find Sands and connect with our community. Sands Ribbon Run continued to grow with the first in-person event, while the Ribbon Appeal offered another meaningful way to remember, welcoming hundreds of people to Sands for the first time.

Thousands of parents, families, friends and communities remembered precious babies never forgotten and raised vital funds to help more parents see their babies grow up.



Ribbon Run 2025

5,408
people took part in Ribbon Run

32 Ribbon Run champions organised local events



Ribbon Run comes to Manchester

For the first time, the Sands community came together in person for a Sands-organised Ribbon Run, made possible thanks to event partner Softcat. More than 800 people gathered at Heaton Park in Manchester during Baby Loss Awareness Week to remember much-loved babies, connect with others and raise vital funds.

Parents, families, friends and supporters stood side by side in solidarity and support before setting out on their route of choice - 1km, 5km or 10km.

The event village also hosted Sands' national Ribbon Display – a place for people from across the UK to dedicate a ribbon to a much-loved baby.

£95,890
raised at Ribbon Run Manchester

800+
Ribbon Run Manchester event participants



> I really enjoyed running the Ribbon Run and raising funds for Sands. After suffering a missed miscarriage earlier this year and the due date falling only a week before the race, I thought it was going to be a sad day for me, but it wasn't. It was somehow heartwarming, knowing that everyone there was there for the same reason and knowing that you are not alone, I found comforting.
>
> Sands Ribbon Run Manchester participant

This year, I'll be helping to support the Ribbon Run with my teammates from Sands United FC Manchester. Events like this are really powerful in bringing together families who have experienced pregnancy or baby loss, as well as raising awareness and understanding in the community. It allows us to celebrate our loved ones, honour their names and share their stories.

Whilst injury will prevent me from running, I am looking forward to supporting my friends and remembering their little ones as well as contributing something positive in the name of my little boy, Arthur.

Bereaved dad and Sands United FC Manchester player and volunteer, Peter Moseley



What an absolutely fantastic experience. Such a 'community' feel, a very emotional experience surrounded by those who have also been affected by baby loss. Our daughter, Rosa, was at the centre of our event and it was wonderful to be able to share her with so many others.

Sands Ribbon Run Manchester participant

As a midwife committed to providing quality antenatal care and education, I care for many women during pregnancy. Most of the time, these women have a positive experience and outcome. However, unfortunately that is not always the case. I'm taking part in Ribbon Run Manchester this year to help raise awareness of pregnancy and baby loss and because I want bereaved families to know that when the journey ends, it's not forgotten by those who are involved in their care.

Jo Gallagher, Midwife and Ribbon Run Manchester participant

Sands Baby Loss Awareness Week Ribbon Appeal

600+
people donated in return for a handmade ribbon pin

58%
dedicated a ribbon for the first time

360+
people dedicated a ribbon for the national display at Sands Ribbon Run Manchester

900+
dedications were made on Sands' virtual tree of remembrance

This appeal was just one of a number of campaigns we ran this year to help more people understand the impact of pregnancy and baby loss, introduce the work of Sands and grow our community of dedicated supporters. More than 2,500 people connected with Sands as part of this work, sharing their personal experiences, finding opportunities to remember and showing allyship.

Every ribbon was worn with love for a baby lost, missed and always remembered. Every donation carried the shared hope for a world where more parents get to see their baby grow up. Together, parents, families, friends and others turned personal acts of remembrance into something bigger, helping break the silence around baby loss.



A first trek to remember

Our first-ever Trek Together event united 159 people to walk for Sands. The beautiful Lakeland fells of Derwent Water provided the perfect backdrop as walkers took on the 10- or 20-mile route through stunning scenery. Striding out with a shared purpose, it was a moving show of support for babies lost and those yet to be born. Mile by mile, walkers raised a remarkable £64,939.



Fundraising your way

Supporters continued to find all kinds of ways to raise vital funds for Sands this year, turning their own ideas, interests and personal challenges into support for bereaved families and work to save babies' lives. From knitting and crocheting to bake sales, charity balls and miles and miles of walking, running and wheeling.

In January, some of the Sands community took on our Run 2km a Day challenge and committed to get moving in memory of much-loved babies, in support of bereaved families and for a future where fewer babies die.



Feedback from Sands challenge participants and fundraisers

> Since losing Rowan in May 2025 I was surviving each day but with no real purpose. This challenge gave me a purpose to start the new year off with a fresh mindset and goal. Thank you!

> My baby died during labour, 12 weeks before I started this challenge. Having a small task to focus on each morning has been very important to my mental health. Being able to raise money for such an important cause has been a fantastic by-product, so thank you for creating this initiative. I will be running 3km a day in February and hope to continue raising more money in the process.

> Taking part in this challenge gave me the opportunity to think through my thoughts from my own baby loss. Each morning when it was cold and dark or I was too tired, I pushed through and did it because I knew I was raising money to support parents in their darkest times.

> Taking part in this challenge has encouraged me to talk about my loss whereas before I haven't really felt I could. So thank you. My Lily's memory and my feelings matter and the support you provide is absolutely invaluable and means more than I could put into words.

A personal mission to raise £1 million

Social media influencers, Cole and Abbie, announced their incredible challenge to turn £1 into £1m for Sands in just one year. Beyond the life-changing work their support will make possible, the couple, who lost one of their twin babies during pregnancy, want to get people talking, listening and understanding baby loss better.

The couple's honest account of their emotional journey, the challenges of managing grief and hope as they continued their pregnancy with their remaining twin and navigating their relationship as they process their grief in different ways has seen their followers open up about their own experiences. The inspiring couple have also introduced Sands to their followers, helping more people find us at one of the hardest times of their lives.

Using their voice and online community to inspire donations, start conversations and create a safe, understanding community for anyone grieving the loss of a baby, the couple are well on their way to achieving their ambitious goals.



Myself and my wife have unfortunately recently lost one of our babies at our twelve-week scan in our twin pregnancy. This, as you can imagine, has hit us and our family really hard. The support and outreach we have received has been incredible, so we decided to turn our heartache into something positive. Sands is an incredible charity who help so many families across the UK. Throughout the year we will be doing many crazy ideas to raise as much as we possibly can, and we'd love you all to come along and join our journey with us.

Cole and Abbie x

Celebrating two years of shared commitment with the Financial Ombudsman Service

The Financial Ombudsman Service has raised more than £50,000 during our two-year partnership, which ended this year. Staff chose Sands as their Charity of the Year in 2024, kickstarting a relationship that has inspired involvement across the organisation.

Colleagues took part in a whole range of events, including daredevil feats like sky diving and night-time hiking up Mount Snowdon, Yr Wyddfa. They also got involved with fundraising favourites such as raffles and bakes, took on a charity football match and showed support for Muslim colleagues with a sponsored fast during Ramadan.

In between events and challenges, the organisation made time to learn more about pregnancy and baby loss. Awareness sessions and Bereavement in the Workplace training helped employees have a better understanding of what families go through when a baby dies and how to make sure grieving colleagues feel supported, understood and able to talk about their experience openly and safely.

> **Our teams have really thrown themselves into the partnership... We've just been so touched by working with a charity that supports families through some of the most devastating moments imaginable, and their vision of saving babies' lives and ensuring anyone affected is supported for as long as they need really resonates with our values. At the Financial Services Ombudsman, fairness and doing the right thing are central, so partnering with Sands just felt like a natural extension of that.**
>
> **If you're thinking about partnering with Sands, I just say, do it. Their team is incredibly supportive, passionate and knowledgeable. You'll be contributing to life-changing work, and also enriching your organisation's culture, awareness and sense of community. For us, this partnership has been meaningful, unifying and impactful...It's been an absolute privilege to support you.**
>
> **Jane Cosgrove, Chief People Officer at Financial Services Ombudsman**

Retailer NEXT shines a light on Sands

A beautiful candle sold by NEXT gave customers a way to show their support for Sands and help us be there for every family who needs us. The candles could be personalised to create a poignant tribute to a much-loved baby, with the engraved jar becoming a lasting keepsake long after the candle had burned. Sands received 100% of the profits.

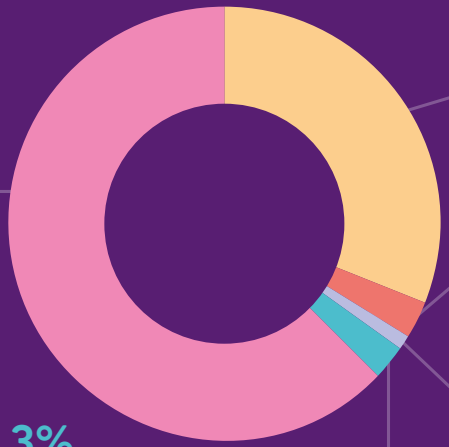


More fundraising highlights

- The Raksha Bandhan Tied in Love appeal let more people know Sands is for them and raised vital funds to help us be there for anyone who needs support
- Supporters exceeded expectations raising over £100,000 with the Big Give Christmas Challenge Appeal. Special thanks go to Aspect Capital who were one of our generous Matched Funding pledgers, helping us achieve this impressive total
- Sands' first Thankathon let supporters know how much they mean to us and the families that turn to Sands for support
- Support from charitable trusts and foundations and significant donations from individuals continued to grow

Finance focus: The highlights

Income 2025/26



31%
Donations from supporters and gift aid

3%
Corporate grants and charitable trusts

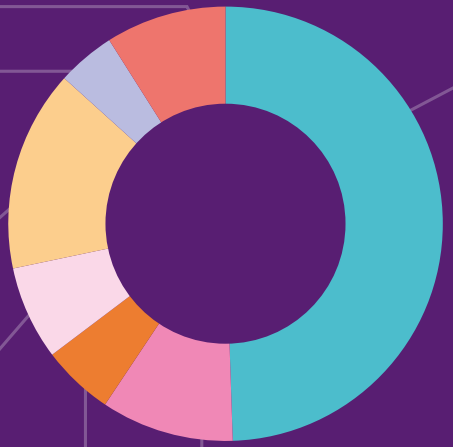
1%
Training, membership and shop

3%
Government and statutory bodies

62%
Community and events fundraising

Donations from supporters and gift aid	£2,761,115
Corporate Grants and Trusts	£267,651
Training, membership and shop	£97,234
Government and statutory bodies	£196,629
Other income	£35,192
Community and events fundraising	£5,633,818
Total	£8,991,640

Expenditure 2025/26



9%
Groups and volunteers

4%
Policy and campaigns

15%
Bereavement support

7%
Training and education

6%
Bereavement care and hospital liaison

10%
Research and prevention

49%
Raising awareness and fundraising activities

Our raising awareness and fundraising activities bring people together through special community and commemorative events in support of Sands, to remember our babies, connect with others and call for change.

These costs help ensure all our participants get the support and care they need. They are not only about raising vital funds, but also about valuing, supporting and engaging the people who make our work possible.

Raising awareness and fundraising activities	£4,547,303
Research and prevention	£909,082
Bereavement care and hospital liaison	£490,704
Training and education	£642,838
Bereavement support	£1,377,204
Policy and campaigns	£398,238
Groups and volunteers	£827,040
Total	£9,192,408

Looking ahead

I hope this update has given you a sense of all that has been achieved over the last year here at Sands. This is the final report linked to our Sands Strategy 2022-2025, and our growth and development in that time is something for us all to be proud of.

Behind every number and every statistic in this report is an experience, a real story of someone touched by pregnancy and baby loss. And that's what matters most to Sands, making sure that both experience and evidence are heard, understood and acted on. And it's how we shape our services, support, training and research.

By listening and learning, we've made much-needed changes at Sands over the past five years, improving what we offer and building a community that better recognises individual needs and is more welcoming to more people than ever before. What we hear and learn will continue to shape what we do next.

Amplifying the voices of parents and bringing vital data to light to address maternity and neonatal safety - including inexcusable disparities in pregnancy loss and baby death - will remain central to our work. No parent's ethnicity or postcode should determine their baby's chance of survival, yet we know it still does.

However, years of tireless campaigning by bereaved parents, Sands and the Joint Policy Unit, and other third sector organisations and individuals have helped put this issue firmly on the political agenda.

Still, as we move into delivering the new strategy, our focus on tackling safety in maternity and neonatal care remains steadfast. Because we know that to save more babies' lives and better support bereaved parents, we must maintain the pressure on politicians to deliver on their commitments.

We're also stepping up our work to create more understanding and recognition of the impact of pregnancy and baby loss across wider society and challenging the myth that baby loss is 'just one of those things'. So as we look to the year ahead and beyond, we'll build more partnerships, because to reach more people we need to join forces with others.



From working with the NHS to better connect professionals to Sands training to using digital channels, brand and influencer collaborations to reach people who don't currently understand why pregnancy and baby loss should matter to them. Together we will spread our message further.

Working collaboratively will also help shape and strengthen our approach to improving maternity and neonatal care. We've already identified where Sands can make the most difference, and together we can ensure our work and the research we support result in meaningful changes for parents and families.

We're ambitious and we're setting ourselves bold targets. Because that's what's needed to create the future we want for babies yet to be born and the families hoping to bring them home safely. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Clea Harmer,
Chief Executive
of Sands

Thank you

We're doing all we can to make maternity care safer and more equitable, so more babies' lives are saved. And if bereavement care is needed, it's of the highest standard.

But we can't do it alone.

That's why we collaborate with parents, professionals, researchers, donors, fundraisers, campaigners, government departments, parliamentarians, Royal Colleges and other organisations to create the change that's needed. Working together we can make sure change happens, and the right care and support is there for every bereaved family, whenever, wherever and however they need it.

So thank you. Thank you for everything you have helped make possible so far. And for all you might do for parents, families and babies in the future.

Thank you to our partners:

100 Strong
A Place In The Garden
Air Products Plc
Allica Bank
Arlo & Jude
Aspect Capital
Babcock International Donnington
Baby Art Studios
Balfour Beatty UK Plc
British Gypsum, Robertsbridge Works
Browwow Beauty Ltd
Bupa
Cannock Chase Crematorium
Carrie Elizabeth Ltd
Cavendish Consulting
CBRE Aberdeen
Centrica
Cherubs Nurseries
Cleveland
Compton House Dental
CPI Mortars Ltd
De Fontenay Ltd T/A Laser Red
De Vere Tortworth Court Hotel
Department of Health and Social Care
DHL eCommerce UK, part of the Evri Group
DSF Refractories and Minerals Limited
East of England Co-op Community Cares Fund administered by Suffolk Community Foundation
Echo Survey Services
Elementar UK
Employee Benefits Collective LLP
Enterprise Mobility
Ethicall
Eventus Recruitment Group
Famly
Fenchurch Insurance Brokers Limited
Fermanagh Early Years Children and Family centre
Financial Ombudsman Service
Forelle Estates Ltd
Foreman Homes
Foyle Food Group, Omagh
Gibby's Deli
Glam & Grace Boutique
Graphic Packaging International
Hastings Direct
HNC: Health Net Connections
Ian Williams Limited
IFIG - Insurance Fraud Investigators Group
Insight UK Uxbridge

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)
IPRS Group
Lewisham Council
Lightfoots Solicitors
Maritime Developments Limited
Millennium Oak Trust
NatWest Group
Neo Next+ formerly TotalEnergies E&P UK Limited
Newport CTSC
Next Retail Ltd
Noble Foods
P F Charitable Trust
Pilgrim's Europe
PKF Smith Cooper
Public Health Agency Northern Ireland
Pure Offices Ltd
Red Gate Software Limited
Rightmove
Rockahula Kids
Samworth Charitable Trust
Scottish Government
Sea Meadow Trust
Softcat Plc
Specialist Group
TauRx
Teddy's Wish
TEKsystems Global Services
The Big Give
The Brickability Group Foundation
The Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust
The Kier Foundation
The Killik & Co Partnership Charitable Trust
The Morrisons Foundation
The Pipeline Industries Guild
The Reed Foundation
three rocks ltd
Tots Play UK LTD
Troy Asset Management Limited
Tughans LLP
UK Power Networks
USB2U
W H Bowker Limited, Hull Depot
Walnut
Wates
Welsh Government
Williams Shipping
Worldpay



sands

Together, We Are Sands

Support us and make an impact.

If you'd like to support our work to save babies' lives and support bereaved families, you can:

Donate:
sands.org.uk/donate

Volunteer:
sands.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-sands

Campaign:
sands.org.uk/campaigns

Corporate support:
sands.org.uk/get-involved/how-your-company-can-help

Leave a gift in your will:
sands.org.uk/legacy

Learn:
learning.sands.org.uk

