

Candidate Pack for Director of Bereavement Support and Community & Volunteering



Welcome



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Bereavement Support and Community & Volunteering at Sands. I am delighted that you are considering joining us at such an important moment for our organisation, for the bereaved families we support, and for the wider movement working to save babies' lives.

In addition to providing much-needed bereavement support and care, we work tirelessly to save babies' lives - turning understanding into action through training, campaigning, research and collaboration with parents, health professionals and partners across the maternity, neonatal and bereavement landscape. Our vision is bold, but it is shared by thousands of families whose voices inform, challenge and inspire us every day.

This role is central to achieving that vision. As a member of our Senior Leadership Group, the Director of Bereavement Support and Community & Volunteering will lead two areas that lie at the very core of who we are. You will bring compassionate, confident leadership to our

teams; ensure that our services remain inclusive, evidence-based and excellent; and help shape a culture in which staff and volunteers can thrive. You will strengthen our community, expand our volunteering offer, and ensure that bereavement support runs as a "golden thread" through all of our work. You will be a visible, credible ambassador for Sands - representing our values, our expertise and our commitment to making lasting change.

We are looking for someone who brings strategic insight, emotional intelligence and a deep commitment to supporting families through the most difficult experiences of their lives. Someone who can lead with humanity and clarity, who can innovate and improve, and who can help us remain not only modern, but leading-edge in how we support our community and shape national change.

If this resonates with you, I very much look forward to receiving your application.

Warm regards,

Clea Harmer
Chief Executive, Sands

About us

We work to save babies' lives and ensure that, when a baby does die, anyone affected gets the support and care they need.

In 1978, a group of bereaved parents came together - to support each other and unite for better maternity and bereavement care. They knew it was vital that parents' voices were heard, and listened to, for change to happen. Since then, Sands has grown. And the community they built - rooted in compassion and a drive for change - still connects and inspires us today.

Today Sands is the UK's leading pregnancy and baby loss charity, connecting communities across all four nations through support and action.

We are doing everything within our combined power to inspire change and prevent babies from dying. Our voices turn understanding into action - saving babies' lives and improving maternity safety and bereavement care through research, training and campaigning.

We are made up of staff and volunteers who work together across Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland to ensure that anyone touched by pregnancy or baby loss has access to support.

Our specialist bereavement support team offers compassionate, trauma-informed, one-to-one and group support, through bereavement support online, by phone and email. Whilst our trained volunteers deliver in-person peer support in local communities through our network of over 130 local groups and Sands United football teams. Together, each year, we host family and remembrance events, providing community and connection. And we provide digital and physical bereavement resources such as memory boxes.

We save babies' lives by amplifying the voices of bereaved families and healthcare professionals, campaigning for change in policy and practice.

Through our training, every year we support thousands of professionals to access our accredited courses, developed using evidence from parents, health professionals and researchers on how to safely support families when a baby dies and what can be done to save babies' lives in the future.

And we're building a research network, with parent voice at its heart, to prioritise and support the studies we know will make the most difference. We share our expertise and collaborate, so funding proposals have the best chance of success.

Together we are Sands.

Job description

Job title:	Director of Bereavement Support and Community & Volunteering
Reports to:	Chief Executive
Direct reports:	3 direct reports (Head of Bereavement Support Services, Head of Community and Volunteering and Bereavement Support Services Co-ordinator Scotland) with 26 staff in total

Role purpose:

Key Responsibilities

- Enable Sands' community and volunteers to contribute to the core aims of saving babies' lives and ensuring anyone affected by pregnancy loss or baby death receives the support that they need.
- Ensure that the bereavement support offered after pregnancy loss or the death of a baby is inclusive, evidence-based, comprehensive and available to all those who need it regardless of ethnicity, age, disability, or demographic group, with particular focus on those groups at higher risk.
- Ensure that the Community & Volunteering and Bereavement Support Services teams are structured, led and managed to enable them to work effectively and confidently to an excellent standard, supporting the strategic aims of Sands.
- As a member of the Senior Leadership Group contribute to the development and implementation of Sands' organisational strategy, ensuring a holistic approach to the delivery of our objectives, and that best use is made of the strength of staff and volunteers.



Main responsibilities:

Leadership

- Use excellent leadership skills to lead the Community & Volunteering and Bereavement Support Services teams to achieve Sands' full potential in these areas
- Provide thought leadership and innovation to drive the changes that Sands wants to see
- Provide thought leadership around pregnancy and babyloss-specific grief, legacy creation, and memory making
- Provide thought leadership around community-building and volunteering, with particular consideration to those volunteering in memory
- Promote the work of Sands externally via public speaking, publishing relevant material, media interviews and a variety of impactful social media channels, with particular focus on community, volunteering and bereavement support.
- Lead on quality assurance in the directorate ensuring that high quality work is delivered on time and effective systems and structures are created to achieve this.
- Identify and manage risk arising from the Department activities.
- Provide leadership around staff support and wellbeing and ensure that bereavement and general emotional support is available to all staff to ensure wellbeing in a challenging work environment.
- Along with the SLG contribute to Sands becoming an inclusive organisation with a particular focus on EEDI structures and training
- Model the values and culture of Sands through excellent leadership; supporting the culture of Sands as a learning and an inclusive organisation and enabling the growth and development of others within the organisation.
- Contribute to the development, evaluation and monitoring of strategy and organisational planning, striving for continual improvement to ensure Sands meets its strategic objectives.
- Lead on a complaints resolution process and ensure staff are equipped to respond supportively and effectively.

Community and Volunteering

- Ensure Sands' community enhances and supports all our work; providing connection, insight and impact
- Ensure our network of local communities across the UK is accessible to all and provides a consistent and high-quality experience
- Build external relationships and connections which enhance and support Sands' community
- Strategically embed volunteers across the organisation to grow and shape a culture where Sands is a volunteer-centric organisation with volunteering an integral part of service delivery
- Centre volunteer experience in supporting Sands strategic aims, to ensure impactful, meaningful participation and support.
- Drive and shape Sands' community and volunteering offer to ensure a wide range of flexible roles are available to bereaved and non-bereaved supporters in support of Sands' strategic aims
- Ensure volunteers are an integral part of service design and delivery across all Sands teams and that a clear volunteering framework supports this.

Bereavement Support Services

- Work strategically to ensure that all of the bereavement support Sands offers after the death of a baby is evidence-based, quality-assured, comprehensive and available to all those who need it via a variety of inclusive channels.
- Create new opportunities for Sands to offer bereavement support through diverse and innovative channels.
- Develop and grow Sands' bereavement support across all channels, ensuring recognition as quality assured and excellent services.
- Build partnerships with organisations and individuals offering evidence-based and quality-assured services to ensure that bereaved parents access the support that is right for them.
- Develop effective relationships with professional bodies and individuals who are key influencers in the field of bereavement support after the death of a baby.
- Ensure that bereavement support runs as a "golden thread" throughout the organisation, and that the tone and culture around bereavement support are reflected in everything that is done, with all staff feeling supported in their work across the organisation when dealing with bereavement.



Safeguarding

- Act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the organisation, developing, implementing and reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- Conduct regular audits and risk assessments and report safeguarding to senior leadership and trustees.
- Contribute to strategic planning around safeguarding and wellbeing.

General

- Undertake other duties commensurate with the post as required by the Chief Executive and Board of Trustee from time to time.
- Work flexibly with other members of the team.
- Maintain confidentiality over personal information relating to staff and clients.
- Abide by all Sands Policies and Procedures.
- Undertake all mandatory training as required.
- Participate in annual appraisal and personal development review.
- The post holder must familiarise themselves with matters relating to Health & Safety management, as affecting themselves, their development and the organisation as a whole.
- Promote the Sands vision and values at all times.



Person specification

Knowledge and experience

- Senior leadership experience in a relevant field (bereavement support, health, social care, community services or volunteering).
- Proven ability to develop and deliver high-quality, evidence-based services for people experiencing trauma or loss.
- Strategic leadership experience as part of a senior team, with strong understanding of risk, quality assurance and service improvement.
- Knowledge of best practice community or volunteer programmes and embedding volunteers across an organisation.
- Knowledge of EDI best practice and experience embedding inclusive, accessible services.
- Experience in safeguarding leadership, including policy, compliance and risk assessment (or ability to step into the DSL role).



Skills and Abilities

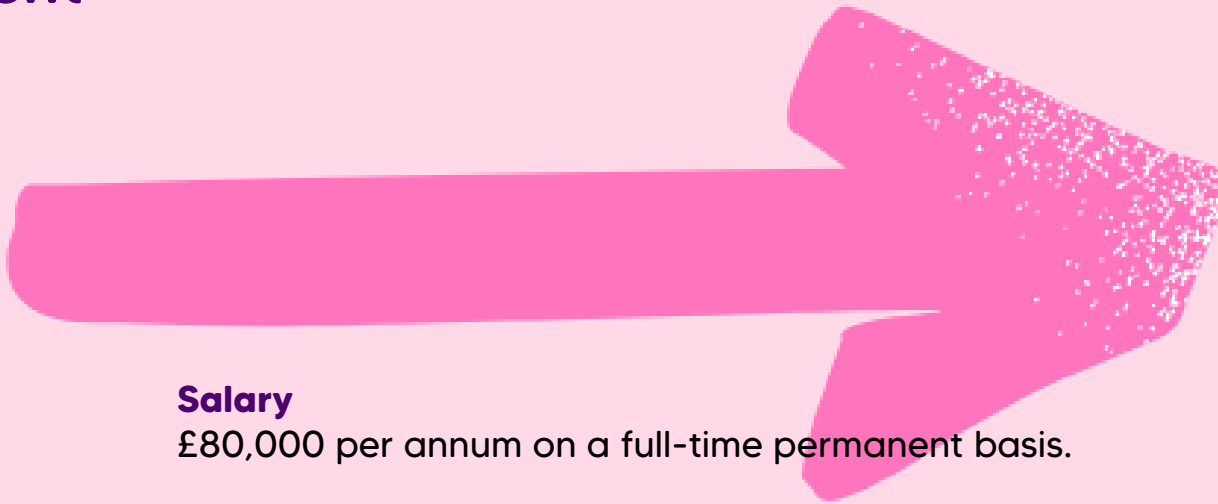
- Track record in building high-performing, confident teams and modelling a learning, inclusive culture.
- Ability to support staff wellbeing and psychological safety and to provide thought leadership on bereavement support, grief and memory-making.
- Experience designing innovative, user-led services delivered through diverse or digital channels.
- Excellent communicator able to represent Sands externally through media, speaking and stakeholder engagement.
- Strong partnership-building skills with clinicians, community partners and sector bodies.
- Ability to communicate sensitively and clearly with bereaved parents, volunteers and professionals.
- Strong planning, organisational and governance capabilities.
- Competence in managing safeguarding, risk and quality frameworks.

Personal Qualities

- Strong, compassionate leader capable of supporting teams working in emotionally demanding environments.
- High standards of professionalism, confidentiality and integrity.
- Emotionally intelligent, compassionate and resilient.
- Aligned with Sands' core values of compassion, collaboration, inclusion, and integrity.



Terms of appointment



Salary

£80,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location

Hybrid (between home and London office in SE1)

Pension

4.5% salary sacrifice increasing to 5.5% after 3 years

Annual leave

28 days plus bank holidays.

How to apply



To make an application, please go to www.starfishsearch/jobs/sands-dir-bev-supp-comm-volunteer and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Sunday 11th January 2026

Preliminary interviews: w/c 19th January 2026

Final Panel interviews: w/c 26th January and w/c 2nd February 2026