

Information and support for grandparents

**When a grandchild dies before,
during or shortly after birth**





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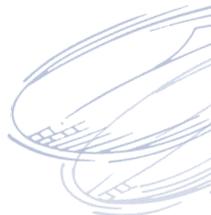
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We are grateful to the many grandparents and others who have contributed to this booklet.



**“Your children are
always your children
whatever their age.
The feelings of
helplessness, of
being unable to take
away their pain, are
indescribable.”**



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Introduction

We are very sorry that your grandchild has died. We know that this is a very sad and difficult time for the baby's parents, for you, and for the whole family. This booklet is based on what many bereaved grandparents have told us they needed to know. It also includes quite a lot of information about how the parents might be feeling. We hope you will find it helpful.

When a baby dies

The death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth is now generally recognised as a major bereavement for the baby's parents. However, there is still little understanding of how the death affects the wider family. Very few people expect grandparents and other family members to grieve or to be distressed.

As a grandparent, you grieve not only for the death of your grandchild and the loss of your own hopes and dreams; you also grieve for the parents and particularly for your own child, the mother or the father of the baby who has died. It is extremely upsetting to have to watch the distress of your own child, however old they are, and to be unable to protect them or take their pain away.

*"Wanting to make it better for your child – that is the grief of a grandparent."
Grandmother*

For some grandparents, the death of a grandchild also brings back painful memories of their own childbearing losses. Until the 1980s, the death of a baby was often dismissed as unimportant and parents received very little understanding or support. They were likely to have been told to forget about their baby, to go away and have another, and to carry on as though nothing had happened. But even with sensitive and supportive care the grief that follows a baby's death may never go away completely, and can be re-awakened many years later.

Grief and grieving

Everyone's experience is individual, and every circumstance is different. But the death of a baby can bring a grief that is deeper and lasts much longer than most people realise. Many parents say that they never knew it was possible to feel such sadness, and that their lives have been turned completely upside down.

The following describes what parents are likely to experience. You too may be experiencing many of the same things.

Many people assume that if the parents already have children, or could have more children in the future, the loss will not be felt so deeply. But each baby is unique and cannot be replaced. Other people may also think that a loss during pregnancy is not as devastating as the death of a baby after birth. However, research has shown that the stage the pregnancy has reached does not predict the length or depth of grief.

Physical reactions to grief

These can feel very similar to intense fear. Some people have palpitations or chest pains. Others feel a heavy weight on their chest or find themselves sighing a lot. Some feel sick and have diarrhoea; others have a lump in their throat or butterflies in their stomach. Some people may not feel like eating anything; others find that they cannot stop eating. It is common to feel exhausted but find it hard to sleep.

Emotional reactions

Most people feel shocked and numb, especially at first. It can be hard to take in what has happened, to concentrate and to think clearly. It is common to cry and to feel tearful at unexpected times. Some people wake up to find that they have been crying in their sleep. Some have vivid dreams or nightmares, or wake early feeling all right for a split second before remembering what has happened.

Anger is another common reaction to loss. People often become short tempered and irritable. They may be angry with each other, with health professionals, with God or fate, or with other family members. They may also be angry with people who have healthy babies. When your own life has fallen apart, it can be very difficult to accept that, for most people, things are going on as usual.

*“My daughter and I have always got on well. But she became really unpredictable when the baby died. I couldn’t say or do anything right.”
Grandmother*

Many parents feel responsible for their baby’s death. Mothers especially may worry that the death was caused by something they did or did not do. Fathers may feel that they should have been able to protect their partner in some way. As a grandparent you too may feel responsible in some way, perhaps especially if the baby had a hereditary condition, even though it was nobody’s fault and there was nothing you could have done to prevent it.

How people express grief

Although everyone experiences the same sorts of feelings, the way that each of us expresses grief varies enormously. We tend to grieve in the way we were brought up to grieve, and different generations may have different ways of dealing with grief. Culture and religion can also influence the way people express grief.

Men and women tend to express grief differently. Although it is a generalisation, women may be more inclined to focus on and express their feelings than men. Some men express their grief openly; others may grieve privately. Some men put their grief on hold for a while and concentrate on supporting their partner and on the practical things that need to be done. Their feelings may emerge weeks or even months later. This is not necessarily a choice, just the pattern that their grief takes.

Couples

The death of a baby places a huge amount of stress on a couple. It can be very difficult for partners to support each other when both are desperately sad and in need of support themselves. Grief also comes and goes in waves; couples may not feel or need the same things at the same time. They may find it hard to understand and sympathise with each other's reactions and behaviour.

In this difficult and very raw situation, when bereaved couples often feel angry and hurt by each other's behaviour, it can also be tempting to "take sides" and support your own son or daughter instead of supporting them as a couple.

"I felt that my son-in-law wasn't being supportive and I wanted to say something but I was frightened of making things worse." Grandmother

Fathers

You may notice that most people focus on supporting the bereaved mother and assume that the father will be strong and will support her. They often fail to realise that a father is also profoundly affected by the death of his baby. His own needs and feelings are often ignored. In addition to his own grief he is also witnessing the mother's pain and distress.

"It took a long time for someone to ask me how I was." Dad

It is often the father who has the hard task of breaking the news of the baby's death to family and friends and coping with their shock and pain. If the couple already have a child or children, he has to find a way of ensuring that they are cared for and explaining to them why the baby will not be coming home. When the mother is ill or if her life is in danger, the father faces additional fear and worry.

"Nobody is strong enough to carry two people's grief." Dad

Single parents and teenagers

A single parent may never have had any support from their partner, or their relationship may have broken down during the pregnancy or as a result of the additional stress that bereavement brings. They are likely to need a great deal of support from their family and friends.

Teenage mothers are also likely to need a great deal of practical help and support even if the father is involved. Young friends who were very interested and supportive during the pregnancy often fade away after the birth of a healthy child, and may be more likely to do so when a baby dies.

Other people's reactions

Many people simply don't know how to react when a baby has died. Few understand the impact of a baby's death. Some friends and family members may avoid talking about the baby, or may change the subject if the baby is mentioned. Often they don't know what to say or are frightened of causing more distress. Many bereaved parents say that friends and acquaintances even cross the road to avoid having to talk to them. You may find that some people do the same with you.

People may also say things that are hurtful in a mistaken attempt to provide comfort, such as, "It was probably for the best" or, "At least they can have other children". It is natural to feel hurt or angry at this, but they almost certainly don't know what to say. If you know people well enough you might like to suggest that they read our booklet *For family and friends: how you can help*.

Fortunately some people are very supportive, perhaps especially if they themselves have experienced the death of a child or a grandchild.

"We were helped by the thoughtfulness of a couple who brought us a bunch of flowers tied with a pink ribbon – no words." Grandfather

You may also find that friends talk to you, perhaps for the first time, about their own experience of losing a baby in the past.

"Several times when we shared our story of bereavement with other older people, they told us of their own loss years before." Grandfather

Care from health professionals

You may be aware that the way that bereaved parents are cared for has changed a great deal over the last 20 or 30 years. Most doctors, midwives and other health professionals now have a better understanding of what grieving parents might want and how to help and support them.

Parents are usually offered a number of choices about what they can do when their baby dies. There are no right and wrong decisions, the parents need to decide what is best for them.

As a grandparent you may find it helpful to know what is likely to be suggested. Depending on the situation you may also be invited to be involved. It is always important to try to take your cue from the parents.

Mementoes and keepsakes

When someone we love has died, we often share memories and stories of them with other people. We may treasure certain objects that remind us of them. When a baby dies around the time of birth, there are few if any memories or keepsakes.

Parents are now offered opportunities to create memories and to collect keepsakes. Staff may offer to take the baby's hand and footprints, and a lock of hair if the baby has any. Some parents want to keep wrist bracelets, scan pictures, cot cards and other reminders of their baby.

Some hospitals offer parents a memory booklet or memory box to store these things in. Some parents make their own memory box, or order one from Sands. You may also want to create your own keepsakes.

"We found it helpful to write to the baby: we still have the letter." Grandfather

Seeing and holding the baby

Parents are now asked if they would like to see and hold their baby. For many, the time they spend with their baby becomes their most precious memory and an experience that they wouldn't have missed for the world. The parents may ask you if you would like to see and hold the baby as well. If they do, you will have precious memories to share with the parents in the future.

Most babies look perfect after death. However, if the baby died some time before he or she was born, their appearance may have deteriorated, the midwife or nurse may suggest just seeing the baby fully clothed or just seeing the baby's hands or feet. Some parents also wash and dress their baby, or are present while the staff do this for them.

Photographs

The hospital staff will offer to take photographs of the baby; the parents may also want to take their own. These photos may include some of the baby alone, with one or both parents, with brothers and sisters, or with you or other family members. You may want a photo to keep and perhaps display at home.

Naming the baby

Many parents name their baby. They may decide to have a naming or other ceremony, and may invite you and other family members to be there.

It is important to most parents that the grandparents acknowledge their grandchild's existence. You can do this by always using the baby's name when talking about him or her, and by including the baby who died when people ask if you have grandchildren.

**“When someone asks if I have grandchildren, I usually say, ‘I have six living grandchildren and one who was stillborn.’
Grandmother**

Registration and a funeral

Registration

A baby who is stillborn (that is, born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy) and a baby who lived even for a very short while and then died, must be registered at the register office. If the father or the mother goes to register by themselves, you could offer to go with them if you can.

A funeral

A baby who is stillborn and a baby who is born alive and then dies must, by law, have a funeral. A baby who is born dead before 24 completed weeks can have a funeral although this is not required by law. Parents can decide whether they want their baby to be buried or cremated.

Many hospitals in England, Scotland and Wales offer to arrange and pay for a funeral for a baby. (Arrangements in Northern Ireland may be different.) Some parents decide to arrange and pay for their baby's funeral themselves. Most funeral directors charge a reduced rate for a baby's funeral.

Whichever sort of funeral the parents decide on, there are usually choices that they can make about, for example, whether they and other family members will attend, flowers, readings and music. The hospital staff or the funeral director will explain the options to the parents.

"My daughter is on her own so we helped her plan the funeral." Grandmother

The baby's parents may need time to decide what will be right for them. This can be difficult, especially if there are different ways of doing things or differing religious beliefs in the family.

Offering support

For a grandparent, offering support can be very complicated. The extent to which you want to be involved, or can be involved, is affected by so many things. Perhaps most important of these are your relationship with your own child, how you have dealt with shared crises and grief in the past, and your relationship with your son's or daughter's partner.

It can be difficult to find the right balance between being supportive and intrusive. It can also sometimes be hard to show the bereaved parents that you care without burdening them with your own grief, or making them feel that your grief "overshadows" theirs. Many bereaved grandparents feel that they are walking through a minefield.

"I felt very helpless. All I could do was worry." Grandmother

All this can be even harder if you yourself do not have the support of a partner or someone close to talk things through with.

What you can do

The most important things you can do to support your child and his or her partner are to listen, to accept how they are feeling without making judgements or offering solutions, and to accept and respect the decisions that they make.

They may need to be reassured that you care about their baby and about them. However, they should not feel that they have to comfort you. It is important that you have your own sources of support, so that your son or daughter does not feel they have to stay strong for you.

"I felt torn. I was grieving for my baby, supporting and protecting my wife who was devastated, and trying my hardest not to upset my mother who felt left out." Dad

Some parents need time and privacy and want to work things out on their own. They may want to talk to you, but they may also prefer to talk to another family member or a good friend, or to phone our Helpline (see page 30 for contact details).

It is important not to assume what will or will not help the parents and to take your cue from them. If they refuse some or all of your offers of help, or want to be alone, you may feel hurt or excluded. However, they need to do what feels right for them at this very difficult time. They may also be so distressed that they cannot appreciate your offers or consider your feelings.

"Grandparents have to have broad backs, especially the parents of the baby's father." Grandfather

Depending on your situation, you may be able to offer practical help. For example, in the early days and weeks after their baby dies, many bereaved parents find it extremely difficult to do everyday routine things such as cooking, housework, shopping or walking the dog. The parents may want you to be around if you can, especially if, for example, the mother is on her own all day. However, they may also value their privacy. So if, for example, you cook a meal, they may prefer you to prepare it and then leave.

Some grandparents try to protect their child and his or her partner from further pain by clearing away the equipment and clothes that were bought for the baby. However, it is always important to check carefully whether this would actually be helpful. Many parents prefer

to clear away the baby's things themselves, even though it may be weeks or months before they feel able to.

If you live far away, it may be difficult or impossible to offer practical help or even a hug or a shoulder to cry on. It is very hard to know that your child and their partner are suffering when you can't be there for them. You may want to show your love and support by phone, texts, or via the internet, or in cards and letters.

If the parents have other children

Even babies and very young children are sensitive to the feelings of people around them, though they may not understand what has happened. They may become clingy and dependent and their eating and sleeping patterns may change.

Some may start to wet the bed or want to go back into nappies. This can be very hard for the grieving parents to deal with. They may appreciate your help with childcare, if this is possible for you.

Being looked after by a grandparent who loves them and is not completely overwhelmed by grief can help the children to feel cherished and important.

However, it is probably better for the children to remain in their own home if possible, and to spend time with their parents as well as with you.

Some parents may react by becoming very protective of their children. They may also relax the "rules", perhaps because they feel somehow responsible for the disruption that the baby's death has caused. If this happens, it is important to try to understand that the parents are doing the best they can in extreme circumstances.

Many parents nowadays tell their child or children what has happened. Precisely what a child is told and is involved in will depend on the child's age and ability to understand, the questions they ask, and the parents' decisions. If you are going to look after the children, you need to know what has been said and discussed. Try to use the same words and phrases.

As a rule, it is probably better not to say too much at any one time and to let the child set the pace of any discussion. It is quite common for a child to ask a question or two and then to go off and play and not mention the baby again for some time.

There are some words and phrases that it is generally better to avoid, though again you need to take your lead from the parents. For example, the words "asleep" or "sleeping" may make a child afraid of going to sleep. Calling the baby an angel or saying the baby is "with the angels" may cause problems if someone later says to the child, "you are an angel" or "be an angel".

Although it is difficult for a child under the age of about six or seven to understand the permanence of death, it is important to tell them the truth. Saying that the baby has died is probably best, providing this is alright with the parents. You may also find it helpful to read our booklet *Supporting children when a baby has died*.

The other grandparents

The other grandparents will also be grieving and will be very concerned about their own child as well as yours. You may be able to support each other.

*“Two middle-aged women held each other in a hospital corridor, and wept for their lost grandson and for their children’s pain that they could not ease.”
Grandmother*

However, sometimes there may be tensions between the two families. It is important to try to get on, if only to avoid causing additional distress to the bereaved parents.

If the bereaved parents turn mainly to you for help and support, the other grandparents may feel hurt. Conversely, if they turn to the other grandparents, you may feel excluded and upset. This can be very hard, especially when you want to do everything you can to help.

“Our son and daughter-in-law relied more on her parents at first. We did feel left out. But we tried to let them know we cared and were there whenever they needed us.” Grandmother

When family relationships are difficult

Family relationships are not always easy. The relationships that adult children have with their own parents and their partner’s parents are not always straightforward. Sometimes the tragedy of a baby’s death helps people gain a new perspective on what really matters. It may be possible to set past problems aside and to co-operate in supporting the parents in whatever way they need.

“When our grandson died my ex-husband and I had to see each other. It was really difficult but I think we both managed to focus on our daughter and her needs.” Grandmother

However, most relationships come under additional strain when there is a crisis, and grief can make it harder than usual to see other people’s points of view and to accept different ways of doing things.

Other pregnancies and births

Even when relationships are good, it can be very hard if another family member is pregnant or has a healthy baby.

“My daughter had just been told her baby had died. Almost her first thought was, ‘What do I say to my sister? She’s due any time now!’” Grandmother

Some bereaved parents find it distressing to be with or to hear about expectant or new parents and babies. It can also be difficult for the parents of a new baby; they may feel constrained and unable to celebrate their baby’s arrival as they would like. As a grandparent, you may find yourself supporting everyone through this very difficult time.

“My daughter-in-law had a miscarriage and would do everything she could to avoid my daughter who was pregnant.” Grandmother

The longer term

The parents

The emotional roller-coaster that many grieving parents go through in the weeks and months after their baby has died is a natural response to their loss. This intense grief can go on for a long time; many parents find it hard to believe that they will ever feel all right again. They often feel under pressure from friends, family and colleagues to “get over” the death of their baby and move on. They may feel they have to hide their grief and put on happy faces. It is helpful to go at their pace and not to expect too much too soon. For instance, it may be several weeks or months before they can consider going back to work.

Many parents find it helpful to talk to others who have had similar experiences. Some contact our Helpline or a local Sands support group very soon after their baby’s death, others wait weeks or months. Many connect with other parents via the online forum on our website. Most parents say that the comfort of being able to say exactly how they feel, and of being completely accepted and understood by people who have been through similar experiences, is invaluable. It helps them not to feel so alone. Our contact details are on page 30 of this booklet.

With time, most parents can function normally, but some may find that they need professional help along the way. Some have persistent intrusive flashbacks of the events surrounding their baby’s death and may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Some mothers suffer from postnatal depression in addition to their grief at the death of their baby.

If, after about six months, one or both parents are still finding it very hard to manage everyday family life or work, they may find it helpful to seek advice from their GP. If you are finding your own grief overwhelming after about six months, you too should consider seeking advice from your GP.

Another pregnancy?

Decisions about if and when to try for another baby are very personal and private. Some parents want to try again very quickly, others need time before they feel ready to even think about another pregnancy. Couples don't always agree about if and when they should start another pregnancy. Sadly, trying again is not an option for everyone. Personal or medical reasons may rule out another pregnancy. You can help by being tactful and by avoiding the subject of another baby unless the parents themselves mention it.

Many people also assume that another pregnancy and the birth of a new baby will erase the parents' pain and grief. But each baby is unique. Another baby can never replace the baby who died.

Pregnancies that follow the death of a baby tend to be very stressful. Understandably, most parents have lost faith in the normality of pregnancy and birth and, often, no amount of reassurance can remove the fear that this pregnancy could end in tragedy too. The birth and the arrival of a new baby can also bring renewed grief, as these are poignant reminders of the baby who died.

As time goes by

It is very common for parents to experience renewed waves of grief even long after their baby's death. These may come out of the blue, or may be triggered by events and dates; for example, the date the baby was due, anniversaries of his or her death, Mother's Day, Father's Day, family celebrations, and festivals. These can be especially hard days for the parents. You could phone or text them, or send a card, a letter or flowers, to let them know that you are thinking about them and that you too are remembering their baby.

"My mother-in-law is the only other person who remembers and acknowledges my baby's birthday. She always puts flowers and a card on the grave." Mum

You may want to acknowledge the anniversary for yourself. You could light a candle in memory of your grandchild, or plan to spend the day somewhere that has meaning for you.

Many parents and grandparents also feel waves of sadness when other children in the family, who were born around the same time, start nursery or primary school or begin to be independent. A living child's progress is inevitably a reminder of what might have been.

**"The death of a grandchild is a life-changing experience. The memories never leave – but we wouldn't want them to."
Grandfather**

Getting support for yourself

It is important to remember to take care of yourself as well; you too are grieving, and giving support in this situation can be very hard. It is generally best to have your own sources of support, especially if the baby's parents and other family members rely on you. A safe place where you can express your own grief and pain, away from close family members, can help you to remain strong and supportive. You may have a good friend whom you can talk to. Many grandparents also contact our Helpline for support and advice. If you wish, we may be able to put you in touch with other grandparents who have had similar experiences.

“I found it really helpful to meet another bereaved grandparent. It was so comforting to know that someone else understood and that they had been through the same experience and had survived!”
Grandmother

Remembering your grandchild

Over time, you may want to create additional ways of remembering your grandchild. For example, you may want to have your grandchild's name engraved on a piece of jewellery, or to wear your grandchild's birthstone. You could also inscribe a bench or a piece of sculpture with the baby's name.

If you have a garden, you could plant a tree, or a rose or other shrub, perhaps one that flowers or produces berries in the month in which your grandchild died. Or you could plant a small tree or shrub in a pot, so that you can take it with you if you move. There may also be special places or gardens locally where you can plant a tree in your grandchild's memory, or donate a bench.

You may like to visit the Sands Garden at The National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. The garden is dedicated to the memory of all babies who have died and is a tranquil place where families can remember their baby in peace. There is usually a Sands Open Day and Memorial Service at the garden every year towards the end of June. Sands also holds non-denominational *Lights of Love* Services every year in December.

Many hundreds of parents, family members and friends also raise funds for Sands in memory of their baby. Some parents have created personal websites for their baby or set up an "In Memory Fund" dedicated to their baby which raises money for Sands. If the baby's parents have done this you may like to contribute towards that. Alternatively, you may like to take part in an activity specifically in memory of your grandchild.

To find out about the many ways you can give in memory of someone precious to you please visit our website, request our information booklet about In memory giving or contact our Fundraising team (details on page 30) who would be more than happy to discuss your ideas.

"We all went through a very hard time after our granddaughter was stillborn. We didn't always get it right with her parents, and of course the sadness still remains.

But I think we are stronger now and have a better understanding of each other. We all appreciate each other more. She will always be our granddaughter; we will always miss her and feel proud of her." Grandmother

More information and support

Sands has a wide range of support services available for parents, other members of the family, especially grandparents, and other children. Many people may be touched by your grandchild's death including friends, colleagues and health care staff, all are welcome to contact us for support and information.

The following pages include further details of Sands support resources and contact details of other charities and organisations that may be helpful to you and the baby's parents following the death of your grandchild.

How Sands can help

Sands is a national charity offering information and emotional support when a baby dies before, during, or shortly after birth.

17 babies are stillborn or die shortly after birth every day in the UK, and each year we support thousands of families whose babies have died.

At Sands there are people who understand what it's like, because many of us have been through this devastating experience ourselves.

You may not want anything from us right away. We are here to help whenever you feel you need it. That may be now or in a few weeks, months or even years.

As well as supporting mothers, fathers and same sex partners, we are also here to help other members of the family and the many other people who may be touched by a baby's death, including friends, colleagues and health care staff. All are welcome to contact us for support and information.

Do you want to speak to someone on our helpline?	020 7436 5881
Do you want to email the Helpline for support?	helpline@uk-sands.org
Do you want to connect with others whose baby has died?	www.sandsforum.org
Do you want to find out about a Sands group near you?	helpline@uk-sands.org
Do you want to know about our other support booklets?	Please see page 31
Do you want to see what's on offer at our shop?	www.shop-sands.org/ shop/
Do you want to know more about what we do?	www.uk-sands.org
Do you want to make a donation or fundraise?	fundraising@uk-sands.org
Do you want to write to us?	Sands, 3rd Floor, 28 Portland Place, London, W1B 1LY

Sands support resources

If you would like more information on any of the subjects we have mentioned, please see our current list of Sands booklets below. You can read or download copies of our booklets on the Support section of our website www.uk-sands.org or you can order copies from our online shop www.shop-sands.org/shop or by calling 0845 6520 448.

Sands booklets

When a baby dies before labour begins

Saying goodbye to your baby

Deciding about a post mortem: information for parents

Mainly for fathers

Supporting children when a baby has died

Sexual relationships after the death of your baby

Information and support for grandparents

For family and friends: how you can help

Returning to work after the death of your baby

Information for employers: helping a bereaved parent return to work

Another pregnancy: for parents whose baby has died

Where to get financial information

For a summary of all the benefits to which parents may be entitled, go to: www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk Enter **Information for bereaved parents** in the search box and click on **Go**.

Directgov websites

These UK government websites contain more detailed information about all the different benefits that parents may be entitled to and how to claim them, as well as links to downloadable claim forms, email addresses, telephone numbers etc.

England, Wales, Scotland: www.direct.gov.uk

Northern Ireland: www.nidirect.gov.uk

Select **Money, tax and benefits**. Then enter what you are looking for into the search box at the top of the page and click on **Go**.

For most benefits parents can also call or visit their local Job Centre or JobCentre Plus (in Northern Ireland: Jobs and Benefits Office, or Social Security Office).

For more help and advice on employment or financial issues, parents can also contact:

Working Families

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

A campaigning charity which supports and gives a voice to working parents. Gives financial and other advice over the phone or by email.

Freephone helpline: 0800 013 0313

Email: advice@workingfamilies.org.uk

Useful addresses

Other charities that can offer support

Miscarriage Association

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Support and information for those affected by pregnancy loss.

Network of support groups and telephone contacts throughout the UK.

Helpline: 01924 200 799 Email: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

TAMBA Bereavement Support Group

www.tamba-bsg.org.uk

Support for families who have lost one or more children from a multiple birth. (Part of the Twins and Multiple Births Association – TAMBA)

Helpline: 0800 138 0509 Email: Use the form on their website

Winston's Wish

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Help and support for bereaved children and young people up to the age of 18.

Helpline: 0845 203 0405 Email: info@winstonswish.org.uk

Other addresses

Baby Mailing Preference Service (MPS)

www.mpsonline.org.uk/bmps

Free site where parents can register online to stop or reduce baby-related mailings of samples, advertisements etc.

Address: DMA House, 70 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8SS

Email: bmps@dma.org.uk

British Humanist Association

www.humanism.org.uk

Can advise on and provide a celebrant for non-religious ceremonies.

Telephone: 020 7079 3580 Email: Use the form on their website

Notes

About Sands

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, was founded in 1978 by a small group of bereaved parents who were devastated by the death of their babies, and by the total lack of acknowledgement and understanding of the significance and impact of their loss.

Since that time, we have supported many thousands of families whose babies have died, offering emotional support, comfort and information. Today Sands operates throughout the UK and focuses on three main areas of work:

We support anyone affected by the death of a baby

Bereavement support is at the core of everything we do. Some of the services that we offer include:

- ▶ Helpline for parents, families, carers and health professionals
- ▶ UK-wide network of support groups run by trained befrienders
- ▶ Online forum and message boards enabling bereaved families to connect with others
- ▶ Website and a wide range of booklets, books and other resources.

We work in partnership with health professionals to try to ensure that bereaved parents and families receive the best possible care

We offer resources and a comprehensive programme of training, workshops and talks for health professionals that give practical guidance on how to meet parents' needs and provide good bereavement care.

We promote and fund research that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives

The UK has one of the highest rates of perinatal death in the developed world. The shocking reality is that, in spite of medical advances, 17 babies are stillborn or die under one month old every day.

We raise vital funds for research and campaign for the government to address this situation as a matter of priority.

We depend on the extraordinary energies of our supporters to raise the vital funds that we need to deliver the wide range of services that we offer.

If you would like any further information or support please contact us or visit our website.

Support:

t: 020 7436 5881

e: helpline@uk-sands.org

Enquiries:

t: 020 7436 7940

e: info@uk-sands.org

Write to us:

3rd Floor, 28 Portland Place,
London, W1B 1LY

Website:

www.uk-sands.org