# Lights of Love Service – join Sands to remember babies and loved ones no longer with us

**Monday 21 November, 2016**

**Lights of Love Service – join Sands to remember babies and loved ones no longer with us**

With the festive season nearly upon us, Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, is organising a series of thirteen ‘Lights of Love’ remembrance services across the UK for parents, family and friends of those whose baby has died.

Actress and Sands ambassador Rakhee Thakrar who played Shabnam Masood in EastEnders, will be attending Lights of Love in London to give a reading. Shabnam’s baby was stillborn in a heart breaking storyline in the popular BBC soap last year.

**Rakhee Thakrar said:**

“It’s vital that bereaved parents and their families have an opportunity to remember their babies in public. Lights of Love is such a moving service and I’m honoured that Sands have invited me to give a reading.”

The non-denominational, family friendly evening of traditional carols, inspirational readings and beautiful musical performances will be hosted at St Pauls Church, Knightsbridge, London SW1X 8SH on Friday 9th December at 7.30pm.

**Dr Clea Harmer, Chief Executive of Sands, said:**

“The death of a baby or loved one is difficult at any time of the year. At Christmas, with so much emphasis on children and families sharing happy times together, the feelings of grief can often seem overwhelming. The welcoming atmosphere of St. Paul’s provides the perfect setting for a candlelit service and an opportunity of peace and reflection to remember loved ones who are no longer with us.”

Those attending this service will be able to add a special message in memory of their son or daughter to a handmade tag to hang on the ‘Lights of Love’ Christmas tree.

Sadly thousands of babies die each year in the UK. In 2015, 15 babies were stillborn or died within the first four weeks of life every day, shattering the lives of expectant parents, their families and friends, and the people who cared for them.

Other ‘Lights of Love’ evenings are being hosted across the UK on 9th December in: Cardiff, Derry, Durham and Wearside, Exeter, Guernsey, Huddersfield, Liverpool, Nottingham, Portadown, Scarborough, Stirling and Warrington.

For further details please visit: https://www.uk-sands.org/get-involved/events/lights-of-love or contact Erica Stewart 0203 598 1949 or erica.stewart@uk-sands.org.

**-Ends-**

**Notes to editors**

There is no charge to attend this event and no need to book. This is an event open to anyone of any religious belief or none. It is also a family event so children are welcome to attend.

Picture - Actress Rakhee Thakrar.

Please contact Lee Armitt, Press and PR Officer at the Sands press office on 0203 598 1959 or communications@uk-sands.org for possible media interview opportunities with Rakhee.

**About Sands**

Sands is the leading stillbirth and neonatal death charity in the UK. They work nationally to reduce baby deaths through promoting better maternity care and funding research. They have a programme of

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training and a wide range of resources designed to support professionals to improve the bereavement care they provide following the death of a baby, and they provide a comprehensive bereavement support service both nationally through their helpline and locally through around 100 regional support groups based across the UK. Further information can be found at www.uk-sands.org.

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