New Sands Freephone Helpline number introduced for bereaved parents

Wednesday 5 April, 2017

With the introduction of a new Freephone number, bereaved parents and their families will no longer have to worry about the cost of calling the Sands (Stillbirth and neonatal death charity) Helpline.

The Helpline can provide a safe, confidential place for anyone who has been affected by the death of a baby – whether a baby died long ago or recently. It is open from Monday to Friday at 9.30am-5.30pm and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6pm-10pm.

The new Freephone Sands Helpline number is: **0808 164 3332**.

Bereaved parents can also email the Helpline if they would prefer at: helpline@uk-sands.org

Dr Clea Harmer, Chief Executive at Sands, said: “With the introduction of our new Freephone number, the cost of a phone call will no longer be a barrier to bereaved parents and their families seeking the help, support and advice they need.

“The demand for the service from our dedicated Helpline team sadly remains high as 15 babies die before, during and after birth every day in the UK. We are committed to providing emotional support and information right from the early hours after a baby's death, through to the weeks, months and years ahead.”

Earlier this year, the Helpline extended their opening hours late into the evening as the Coronation Street late miscarriage storyline involving characters Michelle and Steve unfolded on ITV1. Many people were affected by the story and contacted the charity for help and support during and after each episode.

Sands’ website has been re-designed and has changed its domain name to www.sands.org.uk The new site is now easier to navigate, meaning support services are now more accessible for those who need them most. Bereaved parents can also search for their nearest group via the new site.

For further information on all support services and materials offered by Sands, visit: www.sands.org.uk/support

Notes to editors

For further information, please contact Lee Armitt, Press and PR Officer on 020 3598 1959/07587 925411 or media@uk-sands.org

From April 2016 to March 2017 the Sands Helpline received 2,985 calls and 2,137 emails. The combined total (email and phone): 5,122. Approximately 60% to 70% of everyone who used the service are bereaved parents and their families and friends.

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 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.sands.org.uk

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Scan Me:

Company Contact:

Sands

T. 020 3897 3449
E. lee.armitt@sands.org.uk
W. https://www.sands.org.uk/

Additional Contact(s):
Sands press office out of hours number: 07587 925411

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