

Our Area

East Kent Sands covers Ashford, Swale, Folkestone, Dover, Canterbury and Thanet with West Kent and Medway Sands covering the rest of the County. We continue to work closely together, under the national Sands network.

Awareness

We try to be as visible as possible and attend around twenty fairs and events each year. We are always on the lookout for extra opportunities to raise awareness of Sands and the support available, so do let us know of any events or groups that would welcome a speaker, please let us know.

Our Priorities

Within East Kent our particular priorities are **to start a new support group** in the Thanet area, **to raise awareness**, to help **improve the quality of maternity services** at WHH and the QEQM hospitals, and to continue to maintain and develop the **Baby Memorial Garden**.

The Wave of Light 15 October 7-8pm

On 15 October each year, during Baby Loss Awareness Week, from 7pm to 8pm throughout the world, candles are lit to remember the babies we have lost. With the different time zones, this creates a 'wave of light' across the globe.



Baby Loss
Awareness
Week

Each year on 15 October we hold a Wave of Light at our Baby Memorial Garden and everyone is welcome to this very moving evening. During the event we read out the names of the 160 babies remembered in the garden and we will include additional names on request.

East Kent Sands is run entirely by volunteers and we need to continue to raise funds. An easy way to donate is through our JustGiving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/East-Kent-Sands>

If you would like any more information on what we do, or you would like to talk to us about how you might help us, please contact us East Kent Sands, c/o 13 Goldings Court, Ashford, Kent TN24 9JR. Telephone 01233 643 976, or by email eastkentsands@gmail.com

UK Sands website www.uk-sands.org

Kent Sands website www.kentsands.com

(an East Kent site will soon be available)



Supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby.



*Including the Ashford Baby Memorial
Garden - a special place to remember our
babies in Ashford Town Centre*

In the UK, 15 babies die every day - that is one every ninety minutes - and one every five days in East Kent alone. Losing a baby is something most people never even think about, but it is all too frequent, affecting parents, wider families, friends and colleagues. Our volunteers have been there and understand just how devastating it is to lose a baby, and the importance of support and information.



Some families have memorials in cemeteries or elsewhere in the country, and others may have lost babies years ago, sometimes never having been allowed to see their baby, and perhaps not even being told whether they had a boy or a girl. Times have changed and now hospitals and society are, fortunately, far more understanding and supportive.

With this in mind, we created our unique Baby Memorial Garden within Ashford's main memorial park in the town centre after raising £30,000. The garden is open every day during daylight hours and is a lovely, bright and vibrant area where anyone can sit and remember, and where children can play. There are other gardens but these are generally in crematoria or hospital grounds – ours really is unique!

The centrepiece is a mosaic, created by volunteers and set within the Sands' teardrop motif. Around this are the names of some of the many babies who are remembered.

Name stones are available for anyone who has lost a baby at any age or at any stage of pregnancy for a one-off cost of £40, including setting in the garden. They have two lines, one for the baby's name and one for a date and we are limited to twenty characters and spaces on each line. We will order stones at the end of May, August, November and February each year. Please contact us for further details or an order form.



Support, Information and Advice

We run a telephone support service and a monthly support group in Ashford. This is on the third Tuesday of each month from 7.45pm to 9.15pm at the Community Room in Tesco's Crooksfoot (just by Junction 10 of the M20). Anyone affected by the death of a baby is more than welcome to come along.

The contact number for this group, or for support and information, is **07547 195 791**.

Other Kent Sands support groups are held in Barnhurst (07951 454 682) and Gillingham (07530 363 302).



Support to the William Harvey & QEOM Hospitals Maternity Services



East Kent Sands provides special 'memory boxes' free of charge to the two hospitals for them to give to families, together with leaflets and information etc. We also provide equipment, for example 'cuddle cots' to the maternity units.

We are supporting the special bereavement suites at each hospital, contributing towards the costs and working closely with staff and with the 'Twinkling Stars' project. We pay for

bereavement training for midwives at the two hospital, as well as paying for places at national conferences.

Raising Awareness

Almost everyone will know of someone affected by the loss of a baby and yet it is something few people ever talk about.

Part of our aim is to raise awareness of baby loss, highlighting the scandalously high numbers and creating an atmosphere where people feel able to talk about it.

