

Parental Bereavement and Pregnancy Loss Policy

Our approach

The death of a child or the loss of a pregnancy is one of the most devastating experiences a person can face. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and everyone's experience is different.

This policy covers two situations:

- Parental bereavement - the death of a child under 18, or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- Pregnancy loss - any pregnancy loss before 24 weeks

Both are treated with compassion, flexibility and care. Both are available from your first day with us.

Part 1 - Parental bereavement leave

This section applies when a child under the age of 18 has died, or when you have experienced a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Who qualifies

You are entitled to parental bereavement leave if you fall into one of the following categories:

- A biological (natural) parent
- An adoptive parent, including foster-to-adopt placements where the placement is ongoing
- An intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement where a parental order was expected
- A parent in fact - someone who had day-to-day responsibility for the child for at least four weeks before the death (including guardians and foster parents, but not paid carers)
- The partner of any of the above, where you lived in an enduring family relationship with the child and their parent

You do not need any minimum length of service. This leave is available from day one.

Time off

We provide two weeks of paid parental bereavement leave.

You can take the leave as a single block or in separate periods. It can start on any day of the week.

You can take the leave at any point within 56 weeks of the death or stillbirth. This gives you flexibility to take time when you need it most - whether that is immediately, around the funeral, or months later when grief catches up.

If more than one child has died or been stillborn, you are entitled to parental bereavement leave for each child.

If you have experienced a stillbirth

If you experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, you remain entitled to your full maternity or paternity leave (where eligible), in addition to parental bereavement leave.

Parental bereavement leave cannot be taken at the same time as maternity or paternity leave, but we can discuss how best to sequence your leave so it works for you.

Letting us know

You do not need to give advance notice. Please let your manager know by phone, text or email - ideally by the time you would normally start work, or as soon as you reasonably can.

If you are too upset to call, ask someone to let us know on your behalf. We understand.

If you choose to take leave later than the first 56 days following the death, we ask that you give one week's notice where possible.

Changing or cancelling leave

If you need to change or cancel a period of leave:

- For leave starting within the first 56 days - let us know by your normal start time on the day the leave was due to begin
- For leave starting after 56 days - let us know at least one week before the intended start date

Pay

You will receive your normal full pay for the two weeks of parental bereavement leave. This applies regardless of your length of service.

If you are eligible for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) - which requires at least 26 weeks of continuous service and earnings at or above the lower earnings limit - we will top up SPBP to your full pay. If you are not eligible for SPBP, we will still pay you at your normal full pay. Either way, you receive the same amount.

Part 2 - Pregnancy loss leave

This section applies to any pregnancy loss before 24 weeks. Loss after 24 weeks is a stillbirth and is covered by Part 1 above.

Who this is for

Pregnancy loss leave is available to:

- Any employee who experiences a pregnancy loss before 24 weeks
- The partner of someone who experiences a pregnancy loss before 24 weeks

You do not need any minimum length of service. This leave is available from day one.

What counts as pregnancy loss

Pregnancy loss includes:

- Miscarriage - the loss of a pregnancy during the first 24 weeks
- Ectopic pregnancy - when a fertilised egg develops outside the womb
- Molar pregnancy - when an abnormal fertilised egg implants in the uterus
- Embryo transfer loss - when an embryo transfer during fertility treatment does not result in a pregnancy
- Termination of pregnancy - a medical or surgical procedure to end a pregnancy

Time off

You are entitled to 1 week of paid pregnancy loss leave.

This applies equally to the person who experienced the loss and to their partner.

Letting us know

Let your manager know by phone, text or email as soon as you can. You do not need to provide medical evidence. We will take your word for it.

If you are too upset to call, ask someone to let us know on your behalf.

Pay

You will receive your normal full pay for the one week of pregnancy loss leave. This applies regardless of your length of service.

A note on privacy

Some colleagues will not have told anyone at work that they or their partner were pregnant. Finding out about the loss may be the first your manager hears of the pregnancy. We will respect your privacy and will not ask questions about why you did not tell us sooner.

Support during and after leave

During both parental bereavement leave and pregnancy loss leave, you remain entitled to your normal contractual benefits, apart from pay (which is covered above).

Before you return to work, your manager will arrange a quiet, supportive conversation to check how you are feeling and whether any temporary adjustments would help - for example, a phased return, adjusted duties, or flexible hours.

We may also discuss flexible working or other support where this would be helpful for you.

Grief does not follow a straight line. You may have difficult days weeks or months after your return. If you need support at any point, please tell us.

Coming back to work

You have the right to return to the same job, on the same terms and conditions.

If your total leave (including any maternity, paternity or other statutory leave taken in relation to the same child) adds up to more than 26 weeks, and it is genuinely not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same role, we will offer you a suitable alternative on terms no less favourable.

A final word

This policy cannot capture the full complexity of grief and loss. If your circumstances are different, or you need support beyond what is set out here, please speak to your manager.

We are committed to supporting you with kindness, respect and care.

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