



Bereavement in the workplace

Guide for Managers



Guide for Managers

When workplaces empower, encourage and support bereaved colleagues, their mental and physical wellbeing is improved, and they can thrive and remain productive as they grieve.


It's more important now than ever to create a supportive working culture for our people, however we know this isn't always easy. Colleagues and managers often don't know what to say or how to support someone who is bereaved, especially if they have had a miscarriage or if their baby has died. Navigating the various bereavement statutory employment entitlements can be particularly complicated when it comes to pregnancy loss and baby death.

This guide has been designed to help support colleagues who are affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby.

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[Click here to view our *Finding the Words* animation, which highlights grief in the workplace.](#)



"I was very much supported returning to work with a good support network behind me. However, I still found it difficult due to the taboo surrounding baby loss. Our son was born at 23 weeks but survived for a couple of hours before passing away. Many people didn't even realise this meant I gave birth to and held him."

Bereaved Mum

Sands is here to support anyone affected by pregnancy loss and baby death, including families, friends, colleagues and professionals.

Our helpline provides support, information and guidance. Contact us if you require support for yourself or assistance when working with a bereaved colleague.

Phone:

0808 164 3332

Email:

helpline@sands.org.uk

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Introduction

Baby loss is a general term, used around the world, to describe the various experiences of pregnancy loss and the death of a baby. Every experience of loss is unique but it's important to remember that the length of a pregnancy or cause of death does not dictate the depth of grief felt by those affected.

Terminology

Miscarriage including molar and ectopic pregnancy is the loss of a pregnancy up to 24 weeks of [completed] pregnancy

1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage in the UK

"It was painful to realise that for all these weeks there wasn't a baby growing inside me. It felt like we had been tricked."

Parent

Stillbirth is the death of a baby after 24 weeks of completed pregnancy, before or during birth.

1 in 250 babies in the UK are stillborn

"It's not my memory of meeting you that makes me sad. It's the memories I'm unable to keep making with you that continue to break my heart."

Bereaved Mum

Termination of Pregnancy for Fetal Anomaly (ToPFA) / Termination For Medical Reasons (TFMR) or compassionate induction: when a pregnancy is ended because of a life limiting or life altering medical condition. This can be at any stage of pregnancy, therefore legally defined as a miscarriage or stillbirth, depending on the length of the pregnancy.

5,000 pregnancies are terminated for medical reasons in the UK each year

"We didn't make a decision to end the pregnancy, we made the decision to stop her pain and suffering rather than wait for the inevitable to happen, we made our decision out of pure love for our baby girl"

Bereaved Mum

Neonatal death: the death of a baby shortly after birth but within their first 28 days.

1 in 360 babies die shortly after birth in the UK

"Staff there gave us 6 days with our son, during those 6 days we got to make a lifetime of memories, I'm forever grateful to them for that"

Bereaved Dad



Language is important when talking about pregnancy loss and baby death. The language used in this guide reflects commonly used terms, however, always be led by the language used by any bereaved colleague.



A survey of bereaved parents conducted by Sands found that:

50%

did not feel supported by their employer

49%

of employers did not discuss entitlements to pay and leave with staff following their bereavement

40%

were not offered any additional time away from work

43%

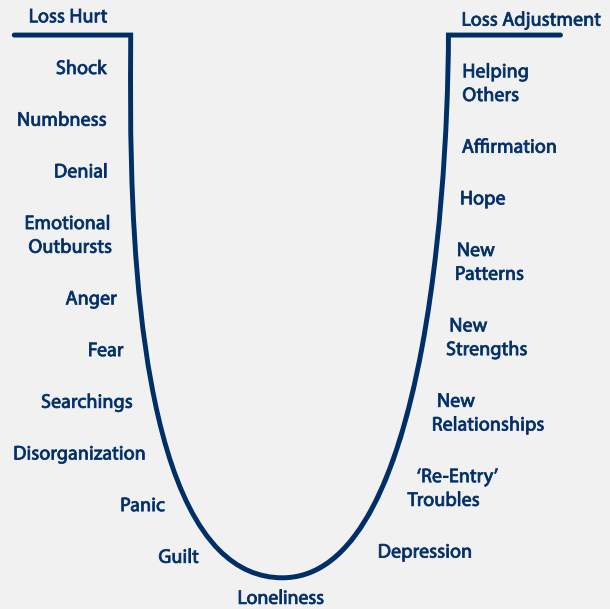
reported that no one talked to them about their baby when they returned to work

Understanding grief

The death of a baby or child is potentially one of the hardest bereavements that anyone can face. It challenges the 'normal' order of life – bereaved parents often describe feeling as though they are in an alien landscape that they must learn how to navigate. There may be little tangible evidence of their baby's life or shared memories, which are often so important when an adult has died.

Often we think of grief as being a series of stages however grief is not a linear process. For many people grief is a jumbled mix of feelings and experiences with no set timeline. Always be patient with grieving colleagues and remember they may be dealing with things you are not aware of.

grief in theory



grief in reality



The death of a loved one is not something you 'get over' but rather find a way to live with after working through the pain of loss. Grief is not something that goes away, instead, life expands around it with new experiences, new relationships and new traditions. Over time the jar or life gets a little bigger. This does not mean the grief disappears, but over time, it no longer completely dominates the jar. Try to be understanding as colleagues grieve and support them as they start to find their new normal.

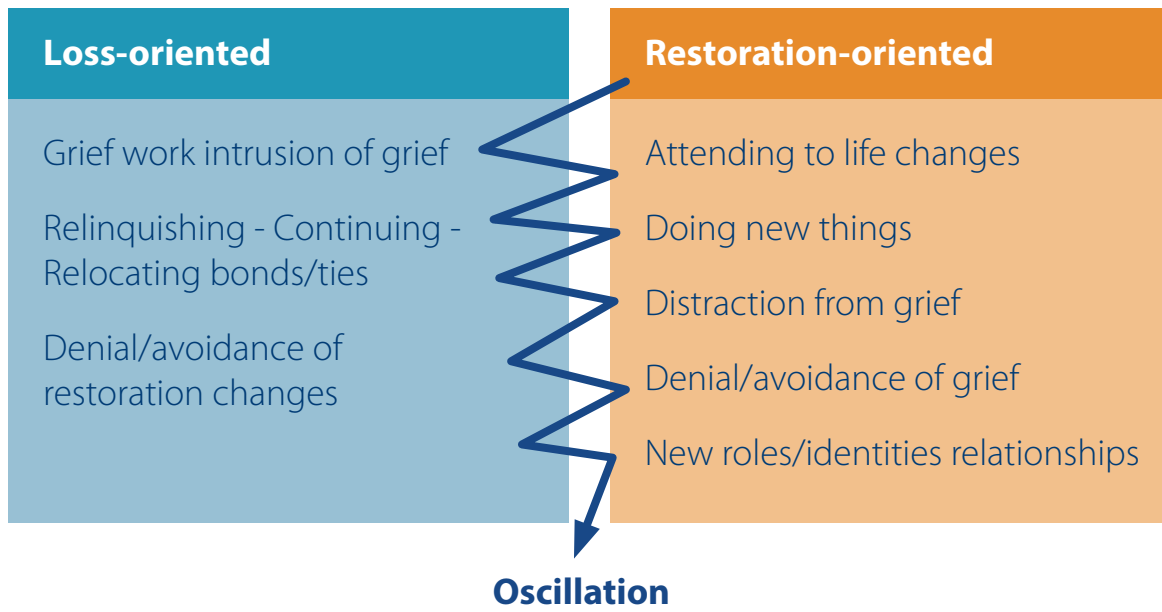


Tonkin (1996)

It is normal when grieving to jump between feeling well and productive, to feeling upset and distracted.

Expressing emotions directly and working through them is not for everyone; for some people work is a welcome distraction and a natural way of coping. It is normal for grieving people to switch between two different ways of behaving, loss-orientated and restoration-orientated.

Everyday life experience



Grief is unique to every individual. It is influenced by individual circumstances such as culture, community, family, gender, personality and their specific experience of loss. Always be gentle and try to understand how you can support them as they grieve.

Supporting a charity of their choice

Fundraising for a charity of their choice is a practical way in which teams and organisations can show support to bereaved colleagues. Talk to bereaved colleagues about how they want to remember their baby and if they would be happy for you to organise a fundraising event in their baby's memory. This is a compassionate act that recognises their parenthood and offers a practical opportunity for other colleagues to show their support.

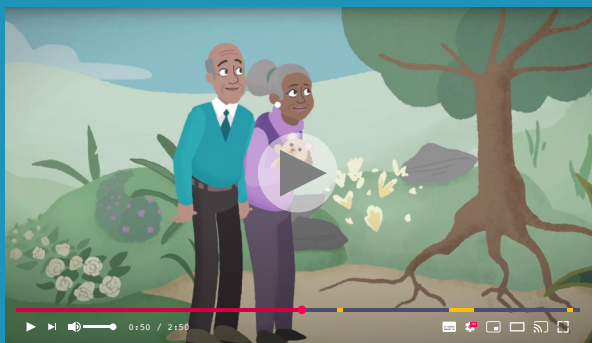
If you would like any information please contact corporate.partnerships@sands.org.uk

“At times in those first hours, days and weeks after his death, it was hard to breathe. I couldn’t concentrate. I forgot things. Fatigue was a constant, no matter how much I slept”

April Rees, *The fog of grief*, 2021

“There was some serious sadness, but that wasn’t the main problem. It was the disorientation. I felt like I was waking up in a completely alien world. Because the whole infrastructure of my daily life was fundamentally gone”

Shulman, *Before and After Loss* 2018



[Click here to view an animation that explores *The Grief Journey*.](#)

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Finding the right words

Sensitive communication with a bereaved employee and with their colleagues is important for the wellbeing of all staff. It can be difficult to know what to say to someone who is bereaved. You may also be expected to provide guidance to other members of staff who are unsure of what to say.

It is OK to simply say **“I’m so sorry, I don’t know what to say”** - this is preferable to saying nothing at all. Gently acknowledging what has happened can bring comfort and remove feelings of isolation.



Language is important, especially following a loss when a colleague may be emotionally sensitive, a “comforting” phrase for one person can be “triggering” for another. Always LISTEN to the language used by the person you are speaking to and mirror the language they use, if they tell you their baby’s name use their baby’s name in conversation.

What to say

When speaking to a bereaved colleague use phrases that express compassion and show that you are there to support them, for example:

- “I was so sorry to hear about your baby, how are you doing today?”
- “Do what’s right for you, we are here to support you.”
- “Take one step/day at a time.”
- “This support is available... use what is helpful to you and leave what is not.”
- “What was your baby’s name? I’d like to hear about them if you feel comfortable?”

Language to avoid

When someone is bereaved it is natural to say something to try and make them feel better. Try to avoid anything that may suggest a lack of compassion or understanding, for example:

- “Maybe it was meant to be.”
- “You’re still young, at least you can have more children.”
- “At least you didn’t get to know him/her properly.”
- “Time is a great healer.”
- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “You’ll be back to normal soon.”
- Never say “at least”

Being prepared may help with potentially emotional conversations. It can be helpful to keep these 6 elements in mind when emotions are running high.

Listen



What are they asking?
What are they sharing?
How can you accommodate them?
How are they feeling?

Mirror loss language



Use the same language they do
Passed away? Died? Lost? Born sleeping? etc.

Express compassion



Only if relevant to the conversation
"I'm sorry to hear about your baby"
"I'm sorry to hear what happened to you"

Follow their lead



If talkative:

Listen and reassure with frequent sounds
Reflect what they say when they pause

If distressed:

Reassure and say you are there
Prompt with gentle questions
Hold the space in silence

Be self aware



Recognise if you feel uncomfortable
(that's normal, you are human)

Speak to someone about your conversation,
ask for advice/help

End with a plan



Agree next steps:

Depending on your conversation,
next steps might be:

Wait to hear from them

Write to them

Send support details

Look into their request

Agree how/when to contact again

A bereavement may have an impact on other colleagues not just on those who are directly affected, so it's important to remember to offer support to the full team or organisation.

- o Break bad news gently as often we are unaware of the personal experience of others at work
- o Ensure that the Sands support details and other support information are available for all colleagues
- o Ensure all relevant HR policies are easily accessible, without the need to ask for them
- o Use sensitive language
- o Remember some colleagues may have personal experience they have not disclosed

"Someone asked me how much he weighed, and what time of day was he born. The happiness exploded inside me when they asked that. All because it was normal things you would ask if someone had a non-stillbirth"

Bereaved Dad

"When I got pregnant again, I was worried that people would forget about my daughter, she is my eldest and will always be part of our family"

Bereaved Mother

"I speak about you every day because people may forget about you but I never will. You are my greatest achievement but my biggest loss"

Bereaved Parent

3

Employment rights and obligations

Individual entitlements for colleagues depend on individual circumstances, therefore, it is recommended that a clear and compassionate Baby Loss HR Policy is implemented to ensure all colleagues and managers are aware of entitlements and how to support a colleague. A template Baby Loss HR Policy is included in Appendix 1.

On returning to work following a bereavement colleagues may ask to reduce their hours initially, or, if their job allows, to work from home. They have a legal right to have such requests considered fully and seriously.

If your organisation has occupational health support or an Employee Assistance Programme, bereaved colleagues should be given the opportunity to access this so that appropriate support is available both before, and after returning to work.

Employment rights following a bereavement

Colleagues have the legal right to 'reasonable' extra time off work when anyone close to them dies, this includes:

- their spouse, partner or civil partner
- their child
- their parent
- a person who lives in their household (not tenants, lodgers or colleagues)
- a person who would rely on them for help in the event of an accident, illness or injury
- a person who relies on them to make care arrangements

Although there is no statutory entitlement to pay during any Bereavement Leave, unless their loved one was their child and under the age of 18, compassion and flexibility is advised and should consider individual circumstances.

If a child dies under the age of 18 or a baby is stillborn then the parents are entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay.

Parental Bereavement Leave is 2 weeks paid leave per child or baby; these 2 weeks can be taken together or separately within 56 weeks of the death. Individual entitlement depends on factors such as employment status and family circumstances.

Eligibility criteria can be found on the UK Government website: www.gov.uk/parental-bereavement-pay-leave



Employment rights following a miscarriage

Pregnancy loss before 24 completed weeks of pregnancy is legally known as a miscarriage. Remember colleagues who have experienced a miscarriage may find the term miscarriage upsetting as it does not acknowledge that their baby existed or the depth of their grief. Others will use this term freely, therefore, the advice is to mirror the language used by the colleague to avoid any distress.

It can take some time for colleagues to recover physically and mentally following a miscarriage so time away from work can be beneficial for many couples. It is recommended that both the woman or birth person and their partner are offered at least 2 weeks paid Miscarriage Leave, this Miscarriage Leave is HR best practice, but not yet a statutory entitlement in the UK. See the template Baby Loss HR Policy in Appendix 1.

If a colleague is unable to return to work for medical reasons they may qualify for Statutory Sick Pay and Leave. Sick Leave taken by a woman or birth person immediately after a miscarriage is protected by law in the same way as other pregnancy-related illness i.e., protected against unfair treatment and dismissal no matter how long the colleague has worked for the employer, or the duration of leave required. Therefore, any Sick Leave relating to miscarriage should be recorded separately and not count toward any sickness records.



Compassionate Leave or Time Off For Dependants are also options following miscarriage depending on individual circumstances. For more information on these options visit the UK Government website:

www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants



Employment rights following a stillbirth

Stillbirth is when a baby is born dead after 24 weeks of completed pregnancy. When a baby is stillborn parents are entitled to the same pay and leave as parents whose baby is alive. This includes full Statutory Maternity/Paternity Pay and Leave, or Shared Parental Pay and Leave, depending on eligibility criteria. Individual entitlement depends on factors such as level of earnings before birth and length of service.

Parents whose baby was stillborn are also entitled to Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave. This is in addition to any statutory Maternity/ Paternity Leave and Pay. Parental Bereavement Leave is 2 weeks paid leave per child or baby; these 2 weeks can be taken together or separately within 56 weeks of the death.

Parental Bereavement Leave starts after any Maternity/Paternity leave has ended but does not have to be taken immediately after.

Individual entitlement depends on factors such as employment status and family circumstances.

Full eligibility criteria can be found on the UK Government website:

www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/eligibility

www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave

www.gov.uk/parental-bereavement-pay-leave

Employment rights following a neonatal death

Neonatal death is when a baby is born alive and dies after birth, including those born before 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Following a neonatal death, parents are entitled to the same pay and leave as parents whose baby is alive, this includes full Statutory Maternity/ Paternity Pay and Leave or Shared Parental Pay and Leave, depending on eligibility criteria. Individual entitlement depends on factors such as level of earnings before birth and length of service.

Full eligibility criteria can be found on the UK Government website:

www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave

www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave

Parents whose baby died after birth are also entitled to Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave. This is in addition to any statutory Maternity/ Paternity Leave and Pay. Parental Bereavement Leave is 2 weeks paid leave per child or baby, these 2 weeks can be taken together or separately within 56 weeks of the death.

Parental Bereavement Leave starts after any Maternity/Paternity Leave has ended but does not have to be taken immediately after.

Individual entitlement depends on factors such as employment status and family circumstances. Full eligibility criteria can be found on the UK Government website:

www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/eligibility

“At first my colleagues never said a word about my baby, although quite a few of them, including my manager, attended the funeral which was very kind and supportive. Over the first few weeks, gradually people did broach the subject with me. I wish someone had said to them, it’s okay to talk to me about the baby”

Bereaved parent

4

Supporting a return to work

Some employees welcome the thought of the routine of work and a return to some kind of normality. For others the prospect is very daunting. Bereaved parents may be entitled to Parental Leave and Bereavement Leave depending on circumstances (see section 4), some people choose to take their full entitlement while others will return to work sooner.

It is necessary to contact a person before they return to work to discuss their entitlements and prepare a plan for their return. Patience is advisable. Grief can affect a person's memory and their ability to process information so providing options and giving enough time to for someone to consider these options is advisable.



Consider the mode of contact; a phone call is a more personal way to offer condolences and an email to summarise this discussion is advised so that your colleague can share it with someone else who can support them in decision-making.

They may not wish to speak on the phone or face to face, so consider first sending a message asking their preference and enquire when would be good time to speak.

It is recommended that one manager takes the lead on communication. This could be a line manager or HR manager depending on the organisational set up and individual circumstances. It is, however, vital that all levels of management are aware of the bereavement and of any arrangements made with the bereaved colleague, to ensure that communication is consistent and any potential for further distress is reduced.

All colleagues should be considered. It is possible that other members of staff could be affected by a colleague's grief; they may become upset by news of a baby's death or by seeing photographs, so careful communication is required especially as staff may look to managers for support and advice on how to engage with bereaved colleagues when they return to work.

"I had amazing support from my line manager and colleagues throughout my time off and when I returned to work. I'm sure it was this genuine support which made my return to work possible."

Before contacting a bereaved colleague:

- Send a note or card from yourself and/or colleagues, saying how sorry you are
- If you hear about a funeral, send flowers, donate to a chosen charity, and / or if you feel able, ask the bereaved colleague if you can attend the funeral
- Make contact via phone or email, say you are sorry and available to talk about returning to work, when they are ready (see Appendix 2 for template correspondence)
- Ask the parent if / how they would like colleagues to be informed. Do they want people to know that their baby has died? Would they like to talk about their baby at work? Would it be helpful for a colleague to let people know before they came back to work or would they prefer to tell people themselves?
- Offer to arrange a fundraising event in memory of their baby and to support a charity / organisation of their choice
- Is there flexible working within your HR policies so that the parent can come back part time, in a different job, or be able to work from home?
- Would they like to come for just a short meeting or just work for a few hours the first day back?
- Would they feel more comfortable having a close colleague walking them in on their first day / week?
- Would they like to display a photograph of their baby on their desk?
- Is there a member of staff they can check in with and/or talk to if they are feeling overwhelmed or upset?
- Do they know that they are able to take time off for medical or hospital appointments?
- If they are pregnant again, do they know that they will be supported?
- Do they want their colleagues to remember anniversaries or special dates?

Return to work timeline

1. When you hear the news

Express compassion in whatever way the parents have chosen to tell you

When told the news, express compassion, for example:

"I'm sorry to hear what happened"

"I'm sorry to hear about [name]"

"We are here for you"

2. Show support

Take action to show support; proactive practical actions can help other colleagues feel they are being supportive

- Send card / flowers to the funeral
- Provide information on any employee assistance programme
- Signpost to relevant bereavement support organisations

3. Plan for return

- Advise to wait to discuss return to work when they are ready
- Ask how they would like colleagues to be told, and inform colleagues as appropriate
- Consider phased return, flexible working, alternative team etc.
- Follow up all conversations in writing
- Allow time to consider and flexibility to change their mind

4. Back at work

- Offer to meet away from the workplace / first thing if working virtually
- Give permission to cry, take a break “do what’s right for them”
- Be flexible
- Ensure all relevant departments and colleagues are aware of what has happened and what accommodations have been agreed

5. Ongoing support at work

- Be flexible and compassionate around anniversaries, birthdays, special days
- Give option to “opt out” of potentially triggering or upsetting situations new baby collection, pregnancy of a colleague, work social events
- Expect people to share memories / photos of their loved one
- Never assume how someone thinks or feels
- Recognise impact on other colleagues
- Be aware that remote working may be a barrier to understanding

5 A supportive workplace

Things to remember and what is needed from you:

1

Many people will consider themselves parents from the time they discover they are, or were, pregnant while others will not. Not all people who have experienced pregnancy loss consider themselves to be, or have been, a parent.

- It is important for those who do see themselves as parents to have this recognised.

2

Bereaved parents feel the same love and pride in their baby as any other new parent.

- Follow the parent's lead. They may want to talk about their baby and share photo(s) or they may not want to talk about their loss. Gently ask them and follow their lead.

3

Medical reviews and investigations following baby loss can take several months, sometimes years and can take a toll on individuals whatever the outcome.

- Understanding and time away from work may be required for these appointments.

4

Those who have experienced pregnancy loss, or the death of a baby are more likely to need professional psychological support.

- Understanding that time away from work for therapy appointments may be required.

5

Children grieve too. A bereaved colleague may be supporting their other children as they try to understand what has happened, and this can take an additional toll on colleagues.

- Understanding these pressures and allowing time off to support their other children may be required.

6

Grief is unpredictable, one minute someone may seem fine and functioning well at work, then the next minute they could be upset, emotional, distracted, and teary.

- This is normal. Kindness, understanding, and patience are all that is required.

7

Pregnancy after a loss can be a very anxious time for bereaved families, so the usual pregnancy events such as midwife appointments or scans may be not be joyful occasions.

- Understanding and patience is required. Time away from work for additional medical appointments may be necessary.

8

Loss of a twin during pregnancy or birth with one sibling surviving, can be especially difficult for parents who are grieving the loss of one child at the same time as celebrating the birth of another

- Remember to acknowledge all of their children and follow their lead when it comes to talking about their babies.

9

Milestones such as their baby's birthday/anniversary, Mother's Day, Father's Day, family holidays etc. are often significant for bereaved parents. Grief emotions may arise around these times and many families will arrange something in memory of their baby on these special days.

- Try to accommodate leave requests around significant days.

10

Those who have experienced baby loss may find it difficult to be around other people who are pregnant, especially in the early weeks and months.

- Be compassionate and supportive if they choose to distance themselves from pregnant colleagues or baby conversations.

11

Be mindful of the importance of any cultural or religious beliefs of bereaved colleagues, and any practices that may take place after a bereavement and how to support them

- Be as accommodating as is possible and try to accommodate leave requests.

A supportive workplace

Checklist

- Implement a compassionate and comprehensive pay and leave policy (see Appendix 1)
- Ensure HR and Line managers undertake bereavement in the workplace training
- Offer bereavement in the workplace training to all employees
- Ensure Sands and other support information are accessible for employees

Further reading

These books have been recommended by some of the bereaved parents we work with. They provide some insight into the experience of baby loss.

If you have any book recommendations that you would like to add to this list, please send your suggestions to training@sands.org.uk

- Sands Bereavement Support Book www.sands.org.uk/sands-bereavement-support-book
- *Loving You From Here: Stories of Grief, Hope and Growth When a Baby Dies*, Susan Clark
- *It's OK that you're not OK*, Megan Devine
- *Life After Baby Loss: a companion and guide for parents*, Nicola Gaskin
- *Lost (Lives Unlived)*, Anja Uhren (anjauhren.com)
- *Why Baby Loss Matters*, Kay King
- *The first breath*, Olivia Gordon
- *Empty Cradle, Broken Heart: Surviving the Death of your Baby*, Deborah L Davis
- *An Exact Replica of a Figment of my Imagination*, Elizabeth McCracken
- *A Gift of Words*, Sheryl McMahan

Books to read with children

- *Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine*, Winston's Wish
- *In The Stars*, Sam Kitson
- *Where are You Lydie?*, Emma Poore
- *The Invisible String*, Patrice Karst
- *Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining death to young children*, Doris Stickney

Appendix 1: Template Baby Loss HR Policy

Download 
Editable Policy Template 

1. About this policy

- 1.1 [Organisation name] wishes to provide all employees with appropriate support in the event of pregnancy loss or the death of a baby. We are very aware of the need to provide employees with as much support as they need at such a devastating time.
- 1.2 [Organisation name] is committed to providing the below for anyone experiencing pregnancy loss or the death of their baby, regardless of their length of service. Everyone's experience is different, and a colleague is entitled to discuss individual arrangements with their relevant manager if needed.
- 1.3 This policy reflects the right of all [Organisation name] colleagues, regardless of length of service, to take at least 2 weeks leave in respect of each pregnancy loss or baby death. This will apply in all types of pregnancy loss and baby death, including but not limited to:
 - Miscarriage including ectopic pregnancy and molar pregnancy
 - Stillbirth
 - Neonatal death
 - Termination of pregnancy for medical reasons (TOPFA/TMFR)
 - Sudden and unexpected death of an infant (SUDI)
- 1.4 All employees who have been affected by the death of a baby or pregnancy loss are entitled to a minimum of 2 weeks leave at their normal salary. Leave can be self-certificated, without the need to provide a certificate from a GP. If you require a further period of absence, please speak to your manager or Human Resources.
- 1.5 The emotional and physical impact of baby, child or pregnancy loss does not have a predictable time limit, and you may find that you need to take further leave after having returned to work. You will be supported when requesting time off for reasons relating to pregnancy loss, or baby or child death.
- 1.6 No employee will be disadvantaged for taking or seeking to take leave in accordance with this policy.
- 1.7 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and [Organisation name] may amend it at any time.

2. Entitlement to Leave for Pregnancy Loss and the Death of a Baby

2.1 If you meet the criteria set out below then you may take 2 weeks' paid leave in relation to each pregnancy loss or baby who has died.

- You have a baby or child aged under 18 who has died.
- You or your partner experienced a miscarriage or baby death at any stage of pregnancy.
- You had or expected to have parental responsibility for the baby or child
- You are a close family member.
- If you are responsible for bringing up a child [who lives with you] but do not have legal parental responsibility.

3. Taking Leave

3.1 You can take 2 weeks leave in a 12-month period in relation to each baby death or miscarriage, in relation to each instance of loss.

3.2 Leave must be taken within 56 weeks of the date of the baby or child's death or pregnancy loss.

4. Notification requirements

4.1 Please keep in contact with your manager [or insert detail] so they are aware of your intention to take leave. The notice requirements are flexible and leave may be granted at short notice where possible.

4.2 You will not have to produce your child's death or stillbirth certificate (or other medical documents relating to the loss of a pregnancy) to be eligible to take leave under this Policy.

5. Other Leave

5.1 If your baby was stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy or died shortly after birth, you are entitled to Maternity Leave/ Paternity Leave / Shared Leave. Please see separate maternity leave policy for details.

5.2 If you wish to take single days of leave, you can take this leave under the [Organisation name] 'Compassionate Leave Policy.'

6. Terms and conditions during Leave for Pregnancy Loss and the Death of a Baby

6.1 All leave under this Policy will be paid at your normal salary. Your contractual provisions

relating to pay and benefits remain during leave.

6.2 During leave you are entitled to benefit from any terms and conditions of service in relation to being given notice of termination of employment, redundancy pay and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Annual Leave entitlement will continue to accrue, as will entitlement to all staff benefits including access to the Employee Assistance Programme [if applicable].

7. Pension Scheme

7.1 [Organisation name] will continue to make employer pension contributions during a period of paid leave.

8. Management Support for Staff

8.1 [Organisation name] recognises that a lack of contact from an individual's employer following baby, child or pregnancy loss can be extremely isolating. If you experience pregnancy loss or the death of a child or baby, you will be contacted by either your manager or another designated colleague to discuss your needs during this time.

9. Returning to work

9.1 Returning to work after experiencing pregnancy loss, or the death of baby can be extremely challenging. On returning to work, you will receive appropriate support from either or all of the following (depending on your individual requirements); your manager, [insert detail]

9.2 On your return to work following leave, you will be entitled to return to the same position you held before commencing your leave. Your terms of employment will be the same as they would have been had you not been absent. Before your return to work, your manager will contact you to ensure you are provided with the appropriate level of support, including making any reasonable adjustments to enable you to return to the working environment.

9.3 We will consider any requests by you to change your working pattern (such as working part-time) after leave on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy. Such requests could be for a short-term change to your current working patterns, or for a longer arrangement. We will try to accommodate your wishes unless there is a justifiable reason for refusal, bearing in mind the needs of our organisation.

10. Flexible working

10.1 We recognise that flexibility is essential for anyone who has been through pregnancy

loss or the death of a baby and aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Your manager should discuss flexible working options with you, these could include:

- A phased return to work
- More breaks and time away from your computer
- Flexibility to work in other areas of the organisation
- Earlier start times and finish times
- A request to reduce working hours on a temporary basis
- Turning your camera off when on video calls
- Remote working or working from home
- Leave for anniversaries and/or birthdays

10.2 These should be discussed and agreed with your manager and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these adjustments continue to meet your needs.

10.3 You will be supported by your manager around informing your colleagues of your individual circumstances. While it is necessary to inform colleagues of your absence, your manager will endeavour to support staff in sharing information around your leave in ways that feel appropriate and support your wellbeing.

11. General support

11.1 [Organisation name] aims to facilitate an open, understanding working environment and so we encourage employees to inform their manager that they are experiencing pregnancy loss or the death of a baby or child at any stage of pregnancy to ensure that the necessary support can be arranged. We understand that you may not initially feel comfortable discussing personal matters with your manager, so you may find it helpful to have a confidential conversation with a trusted colleague or to contact the Sands Bereavement Support Services (helpline@sands.org.uk 0808 164 3332) initially.

12. Medical support

12.1 [Organisation name] encourages you to seek advice from your GP if you require support or advice.

12.2 You can also obtain support from Occupational Health, who can provide access to the following on request to the [insert detail]

[Delete as applicable]

- An appointment with an Occupational Health Adviser
- A course of individual 1:1 counselling

13. Paid leave for medical appointments or professional psychological support

You may take paid time off work to attend appointments (or to accompany your partner) relating to pregnancy loss or the death of a child or baby, including but not limited to medical examinations, scans and tests, and mental-health related appointments. Your manager should recognise that it will not always be possible for you to arrange these around the demands of your role and should support you in managing the impact of time away from work.

14. Important dates and anniversaries

Your manager will be mindful of special dates and anniversaries you have shared with them. Your manager will be sensitive to how you may be feeling on that day. If you request to take annual leave on an anniversary date, we will try and grant this if possible.

Appendix 2: Template correspondence

Download 
Editable Correspondence Template 

Template email/letter for initial contact with an employee following stillbirth or neonatal death.

Dear XXXXX

I am so sorry to hear about [baby's name if known/your son/daughter/baby], I recognise that this is an extremely distressing time and our thoughts are with you and [insert family members if known] your family at this difficult time.

We will do our best to support you and, should you need it, we can offer [a referral to occupational health/ employee counselling service/wellbeing service etc.]

We work closely with the charity Sands, who are available to provide bereavement support for you if needed. Their contact details are:

Sands free Helpline: 0808 164 3332 or helpline@sands.org.uk Website: www.sands.org.uk

There is no need to think about work, but I wanted to write and let you know that you are entitled to statutory maternity/paternity/parental leave and pay which I will arrange for you. A copy of our Baby Loss HR Policy is attached but please free to contact me when you are ready so that we can talk through the practicalities. If you'd prefer, I can contact you again by email or phone; please let me know your preference.

[OR]

As we discussed on the phone.... [confirm what was agreed or confirm the options available i.e., funeral date and who will attend, leave length, pay agreed, next contact who/when, phased return to work etc.]

You also mentioned that you would like me *not to/*to tell your colleagues about [baby's name or your son/daughter/baby] so I *won't say anything unless you ask me to/ will share your news with them on [insert day].

Please contact me if there is anything more, I can do to support you and your family.

Take care

Appendix 2: Template correspondence

Template email/letter for initial contact with an employee on hearing about their miscarriage.

Dear XXXXX

I am so sorry to hear about what happened, and recognise that this is an extremely distressing time and our thoughts are with you and [insert family members if known] your family at this difficult time.

We will do our best to support you and should you need it, we can offer [a referral to occupational health/ employee counselling service/wellbeing service etc.]

We work closely with the charity Sands, who are available to provide bereavement support for you if needed. Their contact details are:

Sands free Helpline: 0808 164 3332 or helpline@sands.org.uk Website: www.sands.org.uk

There is no need to think about work now, however I wanted to write and let you know that you are entitled to 2 weeks paid Miscarriage Leave which I will arrange for you. A copy of our Baby Loss HR Policy is attached but please feel free to contact me when you are ready so that we can talk through the practicalities. If you'd prefer, I can contact you again by email or phone, please let me know your preference.

[OR]

As we discussed on the phone.... [confirm what was agreed or confirm the options available i.e., leave length, pay agreed, next contact who/when, phased return to work etc...]

You also mentioned that you would like me *not to/*to tell your colleagues about what happened so I *won't say anything unless you ask me to/ will share your news with them on [insert day].

Please contact me if there is anything more I can do to support you and your family.

Take care

Appendix 2: Template correspondence

Template email to let colleagues know what has happened (if the bereaved colleague has asked you to share the news – always ask the bereaved colleague to approve the draft before sharing)

Dear [team]

I am very sorry to have to share some bad news.

[colleague's name]'s baby [baby's name, if known] was born on [date] but sadly died at birth/ shortly after birth. [colleagues name and their partner] are understandably devastated and they have asked me to share the news with you.

[OR]

Sadly [name] had a miscarriage on [date]. [name and their partner] are devastated and they have asked me to share the news with you.

Obviously, this is a distressing time for [name] and our thoughts are with them and [insert family members if known], we are doing all we can to support them.

[name] will be on leave until... [what was agreed]

[name] has asked that... [what was agreed around contact, talking about their baby, what happened etc.]

I recognise that this news may be upsetting for you too. We work closely with the baby loss charity Sands, who are available to provide support for you if you would like to talk to someone in confidence.

Sands free Helpline: 0808 164 3332 or helpline@sands.org.uk Website: www.sands.org.uk

Please contact me if there is anything I can do to support you. I'm sure you will join me in sending condolences to [name] and their family.

Warm regards

