We will always endeavour to support employees with compassion and in practical as well as pastoral ways. We therefore have a provision of Bereavement Leave, which is [unpaid/paid] leave that allows an employee to have time off to deal with the personal distress and related practical arrangements, primarily when a member of their family dies. In some circumstances, employees will not need to take the full allowance, and in others, additional time may be needed, depending on the relationship with the person who has died and the circumstances of the death. [[1]](#footnote-1)

In the event of the death of a **spouse** or **civil partner**, at least ten working days [unpaid/paid] leave will be granted.

In the event of the loss of a **child** under 18 or a still born child after 24 weeks of pregnancy, parents or carers will be entitled to at least ten working days Parental Bereavement leave. Eligible employees are entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay details of which can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/parental-bereavement-pay-leave>. The leave must end within 56 weeks of the child’s death. The date of the child’s death is the first day of the 56 weeks.

In the event of the death of an **immediate relative**, up to five working days [unpaid/paid] leave will be granted (an immediate relative includes a parent, step-parent, sibling or a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency), and up to two days [unpaid/paid] leave will be allowed on the death of other relatives, with any additional days granted at the discretion of [insert job title].

Leave days [do not] have to be taken consecutively in weekly blocks and we will always aim to be as flexible as we can be to support the needs of the employee whilst they come to terms with their loss and make suitable arrangements.

Death certificates do not have to be provided to the organisation at any point.

Unpaid or annual leave will be allowed on the death of someone outside of the family to facilitate attendance at the funeral. These circumstances would include (but are not limited to) situations where the employee is responsible for funeral arrangements or is required to travel abroad to attend the funeral.

An employee should notify their manager of their need to take leave as soon as possible or, at latest, on the first day of absence. Discretion will be exercised in exceptional circumstances as outlined above.

Please also refer to the Compassionate Leave policy for immediate arrangements in the event of a need to take care on an unplanned basis for a dependent.

# **Annual Leave at Short Notice**

In the event of bereavement, an employee will be able to take unpaid leave, or annual leave at short notice to supplement their bereavement leave. Requests should be directed to a line manager. An employee who suffers a family bereavement while on annual leave can convert their annual leave into bereavement leave and take their annual leave at a future date.

# **Unpaid Leave**

Unpaid leave on compassionate grounds, up to a maximum of five days may be granted after bereavement. Employees must consult with their line manager before taking unpaid leave.

# **Return to Work**

In certain circumstances a full return to work may not be possible for an employee following the death of an immediate relative – for example, when the employee's grief is likely to impact on their ability to perform their role, or where new child care arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee. In such instances a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours basis is possible where practicable. Alternative duties may also be considered. Any such arrangement would need to be agreed in advance by a line manager in liaison with the HR Lead and would be subject to a maximum number of days and run in line with the organisational flexible working and part-time working policies.

**Employee Support**

Bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a relative. However, the process of grief, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each employee. An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with [insert job title], to ensure that any reasonable adjustments are discussed and implemented, and that the employee is supported to return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement.

**Counselling**

Care for the Family, along with other organisations and charities, offer support and advice, as well as a befriending service, to parents who have lost a child. We encourage you to look at their website if you feel you would like to talk to someone about your loss:

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/bereavement-support/bereaved-parent-support>

Alternatively, employees may discuss suitable long-term adjustments to any responsibilities they may have held prior to bereavement.

# **Culture and Diversity**

We recognise that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways and will do all we can to support religious or cultural considerations that require an employee to observe any practices or make special arrangements which would necessitate them being off work during a bereavement. Please raise requests for help in this area to [insert job title].

1. For more detail please refer to https://www.acas.org.uk/time-off-for-bereavement [↑](#footnote-ref-1)