

Bereavement policy

We recognise that dealing with a bereavement is often one of the biggest challenges of an employee's life. This policy sets out our commitment to supporting staff through their grief by providing bereavement leave, keeping in touch with staff while they are off work, and supporting staff on their return to work.

We acknowledge that every bereavement is different and grief impacts everyone in different ways. This policy is intended to cater for a wide range of circumstances and the differing impacts that a bereavement can have, while also recognising the needs of the charity.

This policy takes account of the introduction of the government policy on parental bereavement leave, which is available to the parents of a child who died on or after 6 April 2020.

Bereavement leave

Bereavement leave is paid leave that gives the employee time off to deal with their personal distress and any related practical arrangements.

Cruse acknowledges that bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guidelines below are intended to show the paid leave an employee is entitled to in different circumstances. Cruse acknowledges that not all employees will need or want to take the full allowance, and some employees will need additional time, depending on their relationship with the person who has died and the circumstances of the death.

Immediate family member (other than child under 18 where the employee is also eligible for parental bereavement leave)

In the event of the death of an immediate family member (other than a child where the employee is eligible for parental bereavement leave – see below) you are able to take up to two calendar weeks' paid bereavement leave.

For the purposes of this policy, an "immediate family member" is defined as a:

- spouse or civil partner;
- partner (including same-sex partner);
- parent (including step-parent);
- adult child (ie who is aged 18 or over, meaning that the employee is not eligible for parental bereavement leave);

- sibling (including step-sibling);

Individual who is not an immediate family member

We also recognise that you may be grieving following the death an individual who is not classed as an immediate family member, but with whom you nevertheless had a very close relationship, for example a grandchild, grandparent, aunt, an uncle, a cousin or a close friend.

If this is the case, please speak to your manager or HR Manager to discuss taking bereavement leave and to establish how Cruse can best support you with what leave you need at this time. You can be granted up to two calendar weeks' paid bereavement leave but we understand that in a few cases this may not be enough and we will work with you to support you as best we can. Each situation is different and will be impacted by:

- the closeness of your relationship with the deceased;
- your obligations towards the deceased (for example if you are responsible for arranging the deceased's funeral);
- travel required (for example if you need to travel a significant distance to be with relatives); and
- any bereavement requirements in relation to religion, such as an extended period of mourning (with the onus on you to tell your line manager about these requirements).

Parental Bereavement Leave

Whilst dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face. Cruse acknowledges how difficult this situation would be for any parent and provide an additional two weeks parental bereavement leave in addition to the statutory parental bereavement leave outlined below:

Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave

The policy, as directed by the government, applies to employees whose child dies under the age of 18 on or after 6 April 2020. This includes parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Who can take parental bereavement leave?

Whatever your length of service, you can take this type of leave if you are the parent of the child who has died, or the partner of the child's parent. In general, you can take this type of leave if you have parental responsibility for the child. This includes adoptive parents.

If you have suffered a bereavement, but are unsure if you are entitled to parental bereavement leave, please contact the HR department for clarification.

What leave a bereaved parent can take?

Under this government policy you are entitled to take two weeks of parental bereavement leave. Please note the following is from the government's policy which would be the absolute minimum Cruse would offer to support you under such tragic circumstances.

You can take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

You cannot take the leave as individual days.

You can take the leave at the time(s) you choose within the 56 weeks after your bereavement. You might choose, for example, to take it at a particularly difficult time such as your child's birthday.

If you have lost more than one child, you have a separate entitlement to bereavement leave for each child who has died.

Notice to take parental bereavement leave

If you need to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after your bereavement, you can take the leave straight away. You do not have to provide any notice but please do let your line manager or HR manager know you will be taking it. Ideally if you can give notice, please do. But we understand these are very distressing times and its not always possible.

To take leave more than 56 days after your bereavement, ideally please give your line manager and the HR department at least one week's notice, though we understand that grief can come out of the blue.

Changing your mind about taking parental bereavement leave

You can cancel your planned leave and take it at a different time (within the 56 weeks after your bereavement). Where your planned leave was due to begin during the first 56 days after your bereavement, please let your line manager and the HR department know you no longer wish to take it before your normal start time on the first day of the planned leave.

Where your leave was due to begin more than 56 days after your bereavement, please let your line manager and the HR department know at least one week in advance that you wish to cancel it.

Pay during parental bereavement leave

We recognise the need to provide bereaved parents with as much support as possible, and we will continue to pay normal pay during your leave.

Rights during parental bereavement leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract will continue.

This means that all benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Returning to work after parental bereavement leave

When you return to work after some time on parental bereavement leave, you generally have the right to return to the same job.

However, a slightly different rule applies if you return from time on bereavement leave that follows on immediately from some maternity, adoption, paternity leave or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the child who has died), and your total time on leave is more than 26 weeks.

In these circumstances, you have the right to return to the same job, unless this is not reasonably practical - in which case you have the right to return to a suitable and appropriate job on the same terms and conditions.

This rule also applies if your leave includes more than four weeks of ordinary parental leave (taken in relation to any child), regardless of the total length of the leave. If you are taking parental bereavement leave, but are unsure where you stand on your return, please contact the HR department for clarification.

For more information on statutory parental bereavement leave and pay, please visit the Gov.uk [page](#)

Annual leave

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

We understand how hard a bereavement can be and that an extended period of leave may be needed. We will talk to you about how we can support you through this from considering paid leave to unpaid. We will do what we can to support you at this time, whilst also still needing to run the charity to support all those who have been bereaved.

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 childcare arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee.

In such instances Cruse will support a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours basis where practicable. Alternative duties may also be considered. Any such arrangement would be agreed in advance by the line manager, would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days and would be managed in line with Cruse flexible working/part-time working policy.

Bereavement can have an impact on concentration, sleep, and decision-making. The health and safety assessment of the workplace will include consideration of the impact of bereavement on employees, their duties and responsibilities, and the context in which they are working.

Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following a bereavement must discuss this with their line manager.

Employee support

Cruse acknowledges that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a relative. However, the grieving, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual. It is fundamental to Cruse that we support bereaved people so we really want to support you. Please do talk to your line manager and your colleague.

An employee with any concerns about the grief impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with either their line manager or the Human Resources Department, to ensure that:

- any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place
- the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement
- or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager.

Cruse recognises that the majority of people do not require counselling to cope effectively with their grief. However, for employees wishing to speak to a Cruse bereavement volunteer to help them with their grief, this can be arranged through HR. For those who would prefer to speak to someone outside Cruse, there is access to Mental Health Support through We Care. Details of which can be found on the Intranet.

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