

Parental Bereavement Leave

Introduction.

- The loss of a child will always be devastating to parents, and the council is committed to ensuring that affected employees are shown appropriate compassion and offered support during this very difficult time.

Entitlement.

- Employees will be entitled to two weeks' leave following the bereavement of a child under the age of 18, or if your baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy.
- This should be taken within 56 weeks and can be in blocks of one or two weeks.
- For employees who have at least 26 weeks' continuous service, the leave will be with pay at the statutory rate.
- As well as parents, this policy includes those employees have parental responsibility under the law for a child, e.g. a step parent, or where those in a surrogacy situation have obtained a parental order.
- For compassionate leave following the bereavement of an older child or other close relatives, please see the council's Special Leave policy.

Returning to work.

- If you would find it beneficial to vary your working pattern or hours to support your return to work, either on a temporary or permanent basis, please discuss this with your manager at the earliest opportunity. All requests will be considered sympathetically and will not be unreasonably declined. The council's Flexible Working and Flexitime policies will provide helpful guidance in this situation.
- If you are unable to return to work due to sickness, following a period of parental bereavement leave, the absence will be payable in accordance with the relevant sick pay scheme. Any such absence should be reported in line with the Attendance Management policy.

Additional support.

- The council's Welfare and Counselling Service is available for confidential counselling, support and advice. They can also signpost you to external agencies which specialise in bereavement counselling. The service can be contacted on (01724) 297147/7503/7004/7896.

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