



Philip's Footprints

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# A SHORT GUIDE FOR PREGNANCY & BABY LOSS IN THE WORKPLACE

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HELPING EMPLOYERS CONSIDER HOW BEST  
TO SUPPORT THEIR EMPLOYEES DURING  
THIS DIFFICULT TIME AND BEYOND.





# A Short Guide to Pregnancy & Baby Loss in the Workplace

## **LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE**

Language to use when supporting colleagues.

## **EMOTIONAL IMPACT**

The loss of a baby can be devastating and traumatic

## **PRACTICALITIES**

It is also a very physical experience.

## **PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LAW**

Details on the 'Parental Bereavement Leave' section of the Employment Law

## **WORKPLACE NEEDS**

Are managers and staff aware of what support is available in-house.  
What adjustments can you make.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**



UK estimates are that a staggering 1 in every 4 pregnancies end in loss, this includes:-

- loss as early as 4 weeks pregnant ("chemical pregnancy")
- ectopic loss
- molar pregnancy
- early miscarriage (under 12 weeks)
- late miscarriage (12-23 weeks)
- stillbirth (from 24 weeks) and
- neonatal death (first 28 days after birth)

## LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Language to use when supporting colleagues:

### Do Say:

- 'I'm so sorry' if you're not sure what else to say just that is fine
- 'How can I help/what do you need' – be guided by them
- 'I'm here for you'
- 'How are you today?' ('How are you' can be impossible to find the words)

### Don't Say Anything that starts with 'at least':

- that starts with 'at least' eg  
it happened early (loss, chemical pregnancy)  
you know you can get pregnant  
you have other children
- I know how you feel (unless you really do and even then please remember – everyone's experience is unique to them.)

### No clichés:

- Everything happens for a reason / time heals all wounds
- Have faith / God's plan / you have an angel in heaven
- Life only gives you what you can handle
- You're so strong
- It's really common



## LANGUAGE IN MEETINGS

Examples of language/questions to use in meetings :

- Gather your thoughts beforehand
- Grief brain is a thing. Make your communication clear, honest and simple.
- Sit down, make eye contact, don't rush
- Express sympathy "I'm so sorry to hear about your baby. I can hear just how devastating this is for you."
- "It sounds like you've been through an incredibly tough few days/weeks/months"
- Consider your language and mirror theirs eg "passed away" "born sleeping" "died"
- Listen carefully
- Recognise parenthood – they didn't have a stillbirth, they had a stillborn baby
- "Would you like to tell me about your baby?"

## EMOTIONAL IMPACT

The loss of a baby can be devastating and traumatic.

- Grieving uses a lot of brain 'processing power' which can affect memory, concentration, sleep - it's exhausting
- There is no timetable for grief
- Grief is not linear, over time you learn to adapt to your grief but may still have days where your loss feels very raw
- Bad days can be caused by:
  - special days - due dates, Mothers Day / Fathers Day, Christmas, school starting
- Pregnancy announcements
- Or... sometimes no reason at all

Consider also the impact on other staff who may need extra support themselves. This may be managers or other employees who been affected by loss in their own lives. [Miscarriage Association - employers-and-managers-information-and-support](#)



## DONT FORGET

- They never will.
- You won't remind them by mentioning their baby. See above!
- Acknowledge parenthood.
- Recognise their baby mattered, irrespective of how early the gestation, including loss before pregnancy.
- Their hopes and dreams for the future have been shattered.
- There is no quick fix for grief, there are no 'Stages of Grief' in baby or child loss.
- There is no timeline - no date to be "over it" or to "move on" by. Whilst the rawness of early grief may subside, the feeling of loss may remain forever.

## **PRACTICALITIES**

The loss of a baby can be devastating and traumatic – and very much a physical experience. Consider:

- Scans may be required through Rayner Clinic, Maternity or Southampton
- Miscarriage up to 17 weeks – medical management at home, or surgical management both 1 day but offered 3 – 5 days sick note
- Later loss may require induction of pregnancy through Maternity
- Time off for check-ups, consultant review, postmortem review, bereavement counselling



## **PARENTAL ENTITLEMENTS**

Parental Bereavement Leave:

- For the loss of a child, from 24 weeks gestation to 18 years
- Day One entitlement
- 2 weeks parental bereavement leave for working parents
- Biological, adoptive, foster parent (or partner of)
- Can be taken over 56 weeks (covers 1st anniversary)
- Unpaid by employers to remove cost burden
- Parallel payment scheme from gov.uk to pay £920 per week to each working parent

Parental Allowance:

- in place for a loss from 24 weeks.
- please note is dependent on sufficient contributions being paid.

Death Benefit:

- currently for neonatal loss and infant/child loss

## WORKPLACE NEEDS

Do you have a pregnancy loss policy? Are managers and staff aware of what support is available in-house?

- 'Pregnancy Loss Policy' created by The Miscarriage Association and adopted in the UK by Co-op, RSPCA, Lidl(NI), Chester Zoo, Newcastle University to name a few
- Consider what to do if someone begins to miscarry or becomes worried about their baby whilst in the office
- How can support be offered to the individual, but also to person supporting them, and other individuals who may have experienced their own loss
- When signed off, keep in touch 'No need to reply, just to let you know I/we're thinking of you'
- Know where else to signpost - do your employee benefits include access to professional bereavement counselling? Charity support eg Philip's Footprints, Jersey Hospice Bereavement Support

What adjustments can you make to ease the return to work? Everyone is unique in their needs. What works for one person may not be right for someone else. Consider :-

- pre-return meeting
- phased return
- return towards the end of their working week so just a couple of days and then they have a break
- interim work from home
- practical support such as a quiet area
- does the employee want people to know - or not
- if the loss is publicly known, do they want people to say anything - or not

