

**Bereavement Leave Policy**

Spinnaker acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

## Paid Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is paid leave that allows an employee time off to deal with their personal grief and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a family member dies.

Spinnaker acknowledges that bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guidelines below are intended to show the minimum paid leave an employee is entitled to in different circumstances.

Spinnaker acknowledges that not all employees will need 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.

## If a Dependant Dies

Five working days paid leave will be granted in the event of the death of a dependant. A dependant could be a:

* spouse, partner or civil partner
* child
* parent
* step-parent
* sibling

## If a Non-Dependant Dies

In these circumstances, up to three days leave may be granted on the death of someone who is not a child or dependant. These circumstances would include (but are not limited to) situations where the employee is responsible for funeral arrangements or has to travel abroad to attend the funeral.

## Giving Notice for Bereavement Leave

An employee should notify their line manager of their need to take leave as soon as possible or, at the latest, on the first day of absence.

Spinnaker has the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances and leave days do not have to be taken consecutively.

## Additional Time Off – Unpaid Leave

Unpaid leave on compassionate grounds up to a maximum of two weeks may be granted after bereavement. An employee must discuss and agree this with their line manager.  
  
**Parental Bereavement Leave**  
Employees are entitled to 2 weeks Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave if their child:

* dies under the age of 18
* is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy

Employees can claim this leave if they are the:

* birth parent
* adoptive parent
* partner of the child's parent, if they live with the child and the child's parent in an enduring family relationship

Parental Bereavement Leave can be used within 52 weeks of the date of the death or stillbirth. It can be taken as either:

* 2 consecutive weeks
* 2 separate weeks
* 1 week only

In order to take Parental Bereavement Leave, an employee should tell their line manager:

* when they want their Parental Bereavement Leave to start
* whether they want to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave
* the date of their child's death

To take or cancel Parental Bereavement Leave, an employee should also give their line manager the correct notice:

* if within 8 weeks of the death or stillbirth – notice must be given before the employee would usually start work on the first day of leave
* if more than 8 weeks after the death or stillbirth – notice must be given at least 1 week before the start of the planned leave

## Parental Bereavement Pay

If an employee has been with Spinnaker for at least 26 weeks, they will be entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay if all of the following apply:

* their child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
* they were employed when their child died
* they earn on average at least the average weekly minimum amount set by the government

To enable Spinnaker to pay the employee for this time off, the employee must ask in writing (give 'notice') for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay within 28 days of taking Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave, starting from the first day of the week they're claiming the payment for.

The notice should state the employee is entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and include:

* their name
* the start and end dates of the leave they want to claim the pay for
* the date of their child's death
* their relationship with the child

**Miscarriage leave**

Up to 2 weeks sickness absence related to a miscarriage will be recorded as 'pregnancy related sickness' and will be recorded separately to other types of sickness.

**Return to work**

In certain circumstances, a full return to work may not be possible for an employee following the death of a dependant. 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 Spinnaker will allow a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours basis where practicable. Any such arrangement would need to be agreed in advance by the line manager.

**Employee support**

Spinnaker acknowledges that 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 individual.

An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with their line manager 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
* the employee's duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager

**Culture and diversity**

Spinnaker recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways and will check whether the employee's religion, belief or culture requires them to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would require them being off work at a particular time. Employees should not assume that their line manager is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to their line manager's attention as soon as possible.

Line managers who are unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture should ask the bereaved employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.

**Date last updated:**

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