

Pregnancy Loss Manager Guidance

2021

This guidance is intended to help managers provide appropriate practical and emotional support to an employee affected by any pregnancy loss, including miscarriage, ectopic, molar pregnancy (loss of a pregnancy before 24 weeks gestation), still birth or abortion.

For ease, we have used the term 'pregnancy loss' to refer to all these types of loss in this document. When referring to the person experiencing pregnancy loss, we use 'woman', 'her', 'she' or 'employee'.

The guidance covers topics and issues that some readers may find difficult or upsetting. You may be a manager with your own experience of loss or an expectant parent managing someone that has experienced a loss. If this is the case, you may need to speak to your own line manager or HR for advice or to direct you to the relevant part of the guidance.

Further information, guidance and support can be found on the Miscarriage Association's website - <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/miscarriage-and-the-workplace/>

Or; this article from HR Zone -

[Bereavement at work: what is the impact, and what can employers do?](#)

Introduction

Pregnancy loss can be a frightening, lonely and traumatic experience for both women and men. It is often both physically and emotionally painful, with effects that can last for a very long time.

Everyone's needs will be different. For example, some people may feel that they can continue to work as normal, while others may require more support, and some may even have to spend some time in hospital. You may have your own experiences or opinions about the impact of pregnancy loss. Everyone will experience their loss differently, and it's important not to make any assumptions about how they feel or how they want to be treated.

Partners, as well as grandparents and other close relatives, might be affected by the loss and you will need to consider how best to support them if they work in your team.

You may find it helpful to read the Miscarriage Association's information on [supporting employees before, during and after a loss](#).



Key employment law points to note:

- If an employee's child is stillborn 24 weeks or more into the pregnancy, they will retain their entitlement to statutory maternity leave and pay. From 6 April 2020, an employee who has a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, is also entitled to take parental bereavement leave.
- A miscarriage before the pregnancy has reached 24 weeks will mean that the employee will not have the right to statutory maternity leave or pay. The employer's sickness absence procedure should be used to deal with absence in these circumstances.
- Where the baby dies after the birth, the employee will retain their full rights to statutory maternity leave and pay, irrespective of the timing of the birth.





How to help

If the loss occurs at work

A pregnancy loss may happen at work. You may not be aware that an employee is pregnant: she is not obliged to tell her manager of her pregnancy until 15 weeks before her estimated due date, or as soon as is reasonably practicable after then (approximately 6 months pregnant).

If an employee suspects that she has started to lose her baby she may have bleeding, severe abdominal pain, and may be faint or collapse. She may be very distressed and panicked, embarrassed and frightened.

You can help by ensuring that she has very quick access to a toilet, and you may need to help her by calling her preferred contact or colleague to assist her in getting home or to hospital or a first aid room. In severe cases you may need to call an ambulance.

If a woman's partner, relative or close friend is told of the loss while at work, they may need to leave at short notice to provide practical and emotional support. If you are a partner, relative or close friend of a woman who has had a loss and need to leave the office, please speak to your line manager who will in turn advise HR.

<https://www.gov.uk/working-when-pregnant-your-rights>

Communicating the news

You will need to consider carefully how to explain the sudden absence of your employee in order to respect their privacy, especially as they might not want others to know the details.

Recording leave and absence

Time off during and after a pregnancy loss is protected as 'pregnancy-related' leave.

If an employee has suffered a loss, any sick leave should be recorded as sickness absence in the 'pregnancy-related' category. Any period of sick leave will not count towards sickness absence trigger points.

<https://www.gov.uk/working-when-pregnant-your-rights>





For periods of absence longer than seven days, the team member will need to obtain a Fitness for Work statement from her doctor or health professional at hospital. [This section of the Miscarriage Association's website has more information on an employee's rights.](#)

If the employee is not the woman who has experienced the physical loss (for example this might be a partner or a grandparent) but needs to take time off work following the loss, compassionate or special leave will be considered. Due to the sensitive nature of this kind of absence we will discuss the required amount of time off and how to categorise it on a case-by-case basis, as not everyone will need the same support and we want to ensure that whatever is agreed works for each family individually.

Future leave

Women who have had a loss, and perhaps their partners, may need time off in the future to attend appointments related to their loss.

In any future pregnancy, additional scans and monitoring may be required. This should always be accommodated. Employees have a right to take reasonable time off for antenatal care. Partners of pregnant people have a statutory right to time off to attend two antenatal appointments, however, we will accommodate as many appointments as is reasonably feasible. This will be discussed and agreed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that we are doing the right thing by each family individually.

Requests by partners for additional time off to attend further scans or other antenatal appointments could also be accommodated by allowing employees to work flexibly, take annual or special leave to attend.

<https://maternityaction.org.uk/advice/time-off-for-antenatal-care/>

Talking about pregnancy loss

It's important to acknowledge the loss rather than to ignore it, unless the woman requests otherwise. You should not make light of it. The Miscarriage Association has more information on [talking about miscarriage in the workplace](#).

She may be very confused and upset. You should bear in mind that the shock of losing a pregnancy may make it difficult for them to contact you to tell you what has happened, and/or to discuss what happens next with work. They may find [this page from the Miscarriage Association](#) helpful.

At an appropriate point, someone should speak to them about what they would like colleagues to know about their loss. This could be their manager or another trusted colleague. If they do not wish to share this information, their wishes should be respected. They should not feel pressured either way.

This type of contact can help your colleagues to understand what has happened, what the effects might be on the team member, and how to be supportive. It will also make it easier for the team member to speak to colleagues when they return to work. Colleagues may find it helpful to look at the Miscarriage Association's [information for colleagues](#) and the leaflet [Supporting someone you know](#).

<https://maternityaction.org.uk/advice/time-off-for-antenatal-care/>





Facilitating return to work

When an employee is ready to return to work their manager should offer them a meeting where any specific needs can be discussed.

This might include a temporary workplace adjustment, which is aimed at enabling a person to remain at work rather than taking sick leave – for example more working from home, or a phased return to work. This can be particularly important if an employee has ongoing hospital appointments to attend. It might also be very difficult for someone who has suffered a pregnancy loss to work closely with or near to a colleague who is pregnant or has recently given birth. If this is the case, it may also be worth exploring whether working in a different location within the office would be possible and helpful.

The Miscarriage Association has [more information on ways you can support your team member's return to work](#) and [offer further support in the future](#).

Helpful Guidance:

Maternity Pay and Maternity Leave Policy

Special Leave Policy

Sovereign Healthcare Employee Assistance Programme - 0800 028 9165

Mindful Employer Helpline - 0300 5556006

External support:

<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/miscarriage-and-the-workplace/employers-and-managers-information-and-support/supporting-an-employee-before-during-and-after-a-loss/>

Miscarriage Association

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

01924200799

info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Information and support to help you through a miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy.

Sands

sands.org.uk

0808 164 3332

helpline@sands.org.uk

Information and support for stillbirth and neonatal death

NHS Stillbirth pages 1 <https://maternityaction.org.uk/advice/time-off-for-antenatal-care/>

[Healthline stillbirth pages](#)

[NHS Abortion pages](#)

[British Pregnancy Advisory Service \(BPAS\)](#)

<https://maternityaction.org.uk/advice/time-off-for-antenatal-care/>

Ectopic Pregnancy Trust

ectopic.org.uk

020 7733 2653

Information and support for ectopic pregnancy

Maternity Action

maternityaction.org.uk

(find information and appropriate telephone numbers on this link)

Information on rights and benefits around pregnancy, pregnancy loss and maternity

[Tommy's baby loss charity](#)

[Tommy's charity baby loss series \(You Tube\)](#)

[Cradle early pregnancy loss charity](#)

Mind

mind.org.uk

Information on mental health support including Wellness Action Plans and reducing stress at work

Working families

workingfamilies.org.uk

0300 012 0312

advice@workingfamilies.org.uk

Advice for working families via website and helpline

<https://workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/miscarriage-stillbirth-and-neonatal-death-your-rights-at-work/>

Citizens Advice Bureau

citizensadvice.org.uk

(search for your local office on this link)

Free and confidential advice on benefits, work, and family

Additional Resources for Men:

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/men-and-miscarriage_l_5c816144e4b020b54d833ac7

<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Men-and-Miscarriage.pdf>

<http://www.miscarriageformen.com/>



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To help create an active nation inspired through great coaching.

Our mission

To put coaching at the heart of physical activity and sport.

Our purpose

To help transform lives through coaching.



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