

## Parental bereavement leave

Parental bereavement leave is time off following:

- the death of a child, if they die under the age of 18
- the death of a baby who only lives for a short time after birth – this can be at any stage of pregnancy
- a stillbirth after 24 weeks' pregnancy
- an abortion after 24 weeks – in very limited circumstances an abortion can take place after 24 weeks if the mother's life is at risk or the baby would be born with a severe disability

Parents will also have a right to [time off for dependants](#).

Eligible parents have a right to 2 weeks of:

- statutory parental bereavement leave, if they're an employee
- statutory parental bereavement pay, if they're an employee or worker

'Statutory' means the legal minimum an employer must give.

This right applies to the:

- birth parent
- natural parent (the person who gave birth to the child who has since been adopted, but has a court order to allow them to continue having access to the child)
- adoptive parent, if the child was living with them
- person who lived with the child and had responsibility for them, for at least 4 weeks before they died
- 'intended parent' – due to become the legal parent through surrogacy
- 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

Parents have a right to take statutory parental bereavement leave if they're [legally classed as an employee](#).

Employees have this right from the day they start their job.

Statutory parental bereavement leave can be taken in the 56 weeks following their child's death.

If more than one child dies, the employee is entitled to 2 weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave for each child.

Anyone [legally classed as a worker](#) is not entitled to statutory parental bereavement leave. But they might be entitled to 2 weeks' statutory parental bereavement pay for time they take off.

## Using bereavement leave and maternity, paternity, adoption, neonatal or shared parental leave

As well as statutory parental bereavement leave, an employee might be able to take maternity, paternity, adoption, neonatal or shared parental leave for:

- the child who has died
- another child they've had

### For the child who has died

If an employee's child dies, they can still take any statutory maternity, paternity, adoption, neonatal or shared parental leave they are entitled to for that child, as well as any parental bereavement leave.

For example, if an employee is a father and their child dies at 3 days old, they are likely to have already started their 2 weeks' paternity leave. They are entitled to finish their 2 weeks' paternity leave and then take 2 weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave.

### For another child

If an employee is due to start a period of statutory maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave for another child, their statutory parental bereavement leave will end when the new period of leave starts.

An employee can take any remaining statutory parental bereavement leave afterwards as long as they give notice, take the leave in one block and take it within 56 weeks.

If the remaining statutory parental bereavement leave is taken within 8 weeks of their child dying, an employee can start their leave as soon as they give notice. If an employee takes leave more than 8 weeks after their child dies, they must give their employer 1 week's notice.

## Parental bereavement pay

[Employees and workers](#) are entitled to 2 weeks' statutory parental bereavement pay if:

- they are entitled to parental bereavement leave
- they were employed when their child died
- they'd worked for their employer for at least 26 weeks, on the Saturday before the child's death
- they earn on average at least £125 per week, before tax (£129 from 6 April 2026)

Employees must ask 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.

[Find out more about how to claim statutory parental bereavement pay on GOV.UK](#)

Some employees and workers will not be eligible for statutory parental bereavement pay. However it's a good idea to check your [organisation's bereavement policy](#), as the employer might still offer time off for bereavement.

### How much statutory parental bereavement pay is

Statutory parental bereavement pay is the minimum amount employers must pay eligible staff.

Eligible employees and workers will get one of the following, whichever is lower:

- £187.18 a week (£194.32 from 6 April 2026)
- 90% of their average weekly earnings

## Enhanced parental bereavement pay

Some employers offer enhanced ('contractual') bereavement pay that's more than statutory parental bereavement pay. It cannot be less.

The amount and how long someone gets it for should be clearly set out in either:

- their [written statement of employment particulars](#)
- the organisation's [bereavement policy](#)

## Taking statutory parental bereavement leave

An employee can choose to take either 1 or 2 weeks' leave.

If an employee takes 2 weeks, this can be taken in one go, or as 2 separate weeks.

For example, they could take 1 week immediately after the death, and take the other week later on.

The leave must end within 56 weeks of the child's death. The date of the child's death is the first day of the 56 weeks.

### Giving notice to take leave

An employee must tell their employer (give 'notice') to use statutory parental bereavement leave.

To give notice, the employee must tell their employer:

- when they want the leave to start
- whether they want to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave
- the date their child died

This notice does not have to be in writing.

The rules for giving notice depend on how long it's been since their child died.

### Taking leave in the first 8 weeks

If it's within 8 weeks (56 days) of their child dying, an employee can start their leave as soon as they give notice.

They must tell their employer before they start their leave. This can be on the first day of leave as long it's before they're due to start work.

For example, if they've started work and give notice to start their leave straight away, statutory parental bereavement leave must start the following day.

They can also cancel the leave, as long as they tell their employer before their leave starts. This can be on the day their leave is due to start, as long it's before they're usually due to start work. Any cancelled leave can be taken later by giving notice again.

### Taking leave after the first 8 weeks

If an employee takes leave more than 8 weeks (56 days) after their child dies, they must give their employer 1 week's notice:

- to take the leave
- if they want to cancel the leave

Any cancelled leave can be taken later by giving notice again.

## Right to return to work

If an employee takes parental bereavement leave as a standalone period of leave (not combined with other statutory family leave), they have the right to return to the same job as before.

## Combining parental bereavement leave with another period of family leave

If employees take parental bereavement leave immediately after another period of family leave, the right to return may be different. For example, if someone has taken maternity leave, adoption leave, ordinary parental leave or shared parental leave.

If you need more information on the right to return to work, [contact the Acas helpline](#).

## Claiming statutory parental bereavement pay

Employees and workers must ask their employer in writing (give 'notice') to receive statutory parental bereavement pay. They must confirm:

- their name
- their entitlement to statutory parental bereavement pay
- 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

Notice must be given within 28 days of starting leave. If someone takes the 2 weeks off separately, they must give notice in writing for each week.

Employees can give notice for their leave and pay in one document.

## If an employee or their partner has a stillbirth or miscarriage

If a child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy:

- the birth mother can get up to 52 weeks of statutory maternity leave or pay
- the birth father or partner can get up to 2 weeks of paternity leave or pay

The birth mother, birth father or partner will be entitled to 2 weeks of parental bereavement leave after they finish their maternity or paternity leave.

While the legal name for the time off is 'statutory maternity' and 'statutory paternity' leave, some employees might not want to call the time off 'maternity' or 'paternity' leave if their baby has died. Employers should be sensitive to the employee's preference and be led by them when having conversations about leave.

If a miscarriage happens in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, there's no entitlement to statutory maternity, paternity or parental bereavement leave.

However, many people would still consider miscarriage a bereavement. An employer should still consider offering time off at what can be an extremely difficult time, both physically and emotionally.

## Supporting an employee after the death of a child

If an employee's child dies, it's important for employers to support their employee after the death, including when they return to work.

As an employer you should take into account that everyone experiences grief differently, and each employee's needs will be different. You should tailor your support to each person's individual needs.

[Find out more about supporting an employee after a death](#)

### **Example of supporting an employee**

Drew's second child dies at 3 weeks old. Drew returns to work after parental bereavement leave. But they're often late and make mistakes.

Drew's manager Billie ignores this for several weeks, not wanting to put pressure on Drew. Eventually Billie decides to have an informal chat to find out how Drew is feeling.

Drew explains that the family is struggling to cope with the death. Drew's older child is refusing to get ready for school. This means Drew runs late and starts the day stressed.

Billie agrees that Drew will start and finish work an hour later. This means Drew can start work on time and in a better state of mind. Billie realises that having this conversation earlier would have been better.