

## What employees should do

If someone close to you dies, you might need to take time off work unexpectedly.

Depending on the circumstances, you might:

- need time off immediately
- decide to continue to work
- take time off later on

### If you need time off

It's best to let your employer know as soon as you can if you need time off work.

You should try to follow your organisation's usual process for telling them. If you feel unable to contact them, you could ask someone else to do it for you. For example, a family member or close friend.

### If you've had a miscarriage

You do not have to tell your employer you've had a miscarriage. But it's a good idea to tell them, if you feel able to, so they can offer you any support that's available, including time off.

## What you should tell your employer

It's a good idea to let your employer know:

- how you'd like to be in contact while you're off, for example if phone or email is best, and how often you want to be in touch
- if you want others at work to know, and if they can contact you
- if you need any information or support from your manager or employer

It's up to you how much you tell them about the death, and whether you want others at work to know.

It might be difficult to know how long you'll need off work at first. Keeping in touch with your employer can help:

- update your employer
- plan your return to work when you're ready

[Find out more about keeping in touch during absence from work](#)

### Example of keeping in touch

Alex works part time for a charity.

When Alex's mother dies, Alex emails their manager to let them know and to ask for time off. Alex's manager replies to say they're sorry to hear Alex's news. They reassure Alex that their work will be covered. Alex's manager also says to call or email if they need anything.

After taking 1 week off, Alex starts to worry about taking too much time off. Alex calls their manager.

The manager assures Alex they should take the time off they need. The manager confirms that their organisation provides 2 weeks' paid bereavement leave. The manager also says that if Alex needs more time off they could discuss using holiday, sick leave or look at other options. Alex's manager also passes on the details of counselling and other support available through work.

The conversations reassure Alex, and also help Alex's manager to understand what Alex needs.

## Leave and pay

Check your contract or organisation's policy to see if your organisation offers leave or pay for bereavement.

Your organisation's bereavement policy, should say:

- how much leave your organisation provides
- if it's paid
- if it depends on your relationship to the person who died

If you're not sure what you're entitled to, check with your manager, employer or someone in HR.

### If your employer does not offer leave for bereavement

By law, you might be entitled to time off if:

- the person who died is your 'dependant'
- your child was stillborn or died under the age of 18

If you're not well enough to work, you might get [sick pay](#) if you take sick leave.

You can talk to your employer about other options for taking time off, including [holiday](#) and unpaid leave.

[Find out more about time off and pay for bereavement](#)

## Returning to work

It's a good idea to talk to your employer before you return to work to discuss:

- when you think you'll be ready to return
- anything you're concerned about when you return
- if the death has changed anything that might affect your work, for example if you now have more caring responsibilities outside of work and want to discuss flexible working options

[Find out about returning to work after absence](#)

## Help and support

If you need support at work, it can help to:

- talk to your manager to see what support or adjustments might be possible
- use your organisation's employee assistance programme (EAP), if there's one available

You can also get help and support from the following organisations:

- [Bliss](#) for support and information for parents with a baby in neonatal care
- [Child Bereavement UK](#) if your child or baby dies
- [Cruse Bereavement Support](#) for advice on coping with a death
- [Hospice UK](#) for help talking about dying, death and bereavement
- [Mind](#) for mental health information and support
- [Miscarriage Association](#) for miscarriage support and advice
- [Sands](#) for support following the death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth
- [Sue Ryder](#) for advice on coping with a death

## **If you're unhappy about how your employer has handled your bereavement**

If you're not happy with how your employer has handled things, you can raise this with them. It's usually best to raise the problem informally first.

[Find out more about how to raise a problem at work](#)