

# Parental Bereavement Leave Policy and Procedure

## Policy Statement

At Lancashire County Council, we understand that dealing with any bereavement is difficult but recognise that dealing with the death of a child is amongst one of the most devastating events that an employee can ever face.

We are committed to supporting you through your grief by ensuring that you can take up to two weeks' parental bereavement leave, at a time of your choosing, and that you are also able to access other resources that we are able to offer to help you as you try to come to terms with your loss.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that you are aware that parental bereavement leave is available to you, if you suffer the loss of a child, to allow you time away from work in order to grieve or to remember your child at a special time that is right for you.

The Parental Bereavement Leave and Parental Bereavement Pay sections below set out what you will receive in terms of leave and pay.

Please also refer to the Procedure section for information on how to request parental bereavement leave.

## Scope

This procedure applies to all council employees, excluding teaching and non-teaching employees in schools and employees who transferred to the council in accordance with TUPE regulations and who remain on their previous terms and conditions of employment.

## Definitions

Parental bereavement leave is a new leave entitlement that applies to employees who have suffered the loss of a child under the age of 18 (or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy), on or after 6 April 2020.

## Principles

Whatever your length of service, you will qualify for parental bereavement leave if you have parental responsibility for a child who passes away. You may be the:

- parent of the child; or
- partner of the child's parent (where you live in an enduring family relationship with the child who has passed away with their parent); or
- "parent in fact" of the child who has passed away (meaning that for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child died, you have been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child but you have not been paid to look after the child – foster payments excepted); or
- "intended parent" of the child who has passed away (for example, a parent using a surrogate); or
- "natural parent" of the child who has passed away who is named in a court order (for example, where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent); or
- adopter of the child who has passed away.

In practice, this means that most employees with parental responsibility for a child who passes away will qualify for parental bereavement leave.

### **When to Use the Parental Bereavement Procedure**

If you have suffered the loss of a child that you have parental responsibility for, on or after 6 April 2020.

### **When Not to Use the Parental Bereavement Procedure**

If you have suffered a bereavement but are unsure if you qualify for parental bereavement leave, you should contact Corporate HR for clarification.

## **Parental Bereavement Leave**

### **Length of Leave**

You can take **one or two weeks'** parental bereavement leave. A week is the same number of days that you would normally work in a week (for example, a week would be two days if you work Mondays and Tuesdays).

The leave entitlement applies to each child.

Parental bereavement leave can only be taken in blocks of a week. It cannot be taken as individual days.

### **Timing of Leave**

You are able to take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

You will need to take the leave within 56 weeks of the child's death.

This lengthy period recognises that, as a bereaved parent, you may need some flexibility as to when you take this leave. For example, you may:

- prefer to take the leave around the first anniversary of your child's death or at another particular time that is special for you, such as your child's birthday; or
- want the leave to follow on from another type of leave you may be taking, for example sickness absence.

## **Parental Bereavement Pay**

We recognise the need to provide bereaved parents with ongoing support at a difficult time in their lives and will continue to pay you your normal pay during parental bereavement leave. This applies to all council employees regardless of your length of service.

## **Rights During Parental Bereavement Leave**

All your contractual terms and conditions of employment will continue during parental bereavement leave, including your normal pay.

### **Procedure**

This procedure sets out the process you should follow when requesting parental bereavement leave.

## Submitting a Request

You should contact your manager (by phone or email) to let them know that you wish to take parental bereavement leave.

When notifying your manager of your intention to take parental bereavement leave you will also need to provide them with the following information:

- the date when your child died (or was stillborn);
- the date on which you want to start your leave; and
- whether you intend to take one week or two weeks' leave.

## Notice Periods

If you want to take parental bereavement leave within the first 8 weeks (56 days) after your child's death, you can take the leave straight away and do not need to provide your manager with any notice. This means that you can begin your parental bereavement leave by letting your manager know no later than when you are due to start work or, if that is not feasible, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If you would prefer to take parental bereavement leave more than 8 weeks (56 days) after the date of your child's death, you should give your manager at least one week's notice of your intention to take parental bereavement leave.

## Cancellations

You can cancel your parental bereavement leave as long as you let your manager know before you would have been due to start work on the first day of your leave.

It is not possible for you to cancel any week of parental bereavement leave that has already begun.

## Additional Support

We recognise that dealing with any bereavement can be stressful but that having to initially deal with, and cope longer term, with the death of a child is life changing. If you have any questions, please speak with your line manager in the first instance who will be able to support you at this difficult time. If at any point you feel worried or upset, you may also wish to contact the Employee Support team on 01772 538333, who can provide an impartial listening ear and practical help if have work-related or personal problems or concerns. Alternatively, you can contact your trade union, if you are a member.

You may also wish to reach out to the various support networks within the council, which include the [Disabled Workers Forum](#), the [Forum of Asian and Black Employees \(FABE\)](#) and the [LGBT Employee Network](#), if you feel that their support could be helpful to you at this difficult time.

## Policy Version Control

Version	Date	Change
1	TBC	New policy and procedure