

Parental Bereavement Leave

What is Parental Bereavement Leave?

The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018 came into effect on 6 April 2020. It provides for at least two weeks' leave for employees following the loss of a child under the age of 18.

Eligibility for Parental Bereavement Leave

The entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave extends to those with primary caring responsibilities who suffer the loss of a child up to the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, and who :

- are a parent or foster parent of the child; or
- have had the child placed with them for adoption (whether by a UK adoption agency or from overseas); or
- are an intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement; or
- are the natural parent of a child who has since been adopted by someone else, and there is a court order allowing the natural parent contact with the child; or
- look after the child in their own home, other than as a paid carer, and have done so for at least four weeks (a parent "in fact").

Entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees who meet the eligibility criteria as set out above are entitled to take two weeks' statutory leave. The leave must be taken in complete weeks but can be taken as a block of two weeks or as two separate weeks.

Parental Bereavement Leave can be taken at any point following the date of the loss but must be taken within 56 weeks' of the date of death. This extended period is to support employees at particular times of the year such as birthdays and the first anniversary.

Employees who meet the eligibility criteria and lose more than one child, will have a separate entitlement for each child under the age of 18.

Statutory Entitlement to Parental Bereavement Pay

The statutory entitlement for employees who meet the eligibility criteria above; meet the lower earnings limit; and have 26 weeks' of continuous service at the date of loss is to receive two weeks of paid leave at the statutory rate of £151.97 per week or 90% of weekly earnings, whichever is lower (as at 4 April 2021).

Those who do not meet all the eligibility criteria will be entitled to two weeks of statutory unpaid leave.

Occupational Entitlement to Parental Bereavement Pay

The University acknowledges that this is a difficult time for employees and has therefore taken the decision to enhance the statutory rate to the equivalent of the employee's full-time salary for the statutory period of leave per child.

Evidence of Entitlement

Employees wishing to take Parental Bereavement Leave must provide a written declaration confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay. A [form](#) is available on the HR website.

No employee will be prevented from taking Parental Bereavement Leave in advance of providing the declaration. However, the declaration will be required.

No further evidence of entitlement will be required.

Notification of taking Parental Bereavement Leave

No notice will be required from employees if they are to take Parental Bereavement Leave very soon following the loss. However, there will be a requirement for an employee to tell their Line Manager that they are absent because they are exercising their right to Parental Bereavement Leave before commencing their leave. Informal notice, for example by phone, in person, or by email is acceptable.

If an employee wishes to take Parental Bereavement Leave later than 56 days' after the child's death, for example to coincide with the first anniversary, at least one week's written notice of this intention will be required.

If an employee wishes to cancel their planned date of leave, and the leave is planned for later than 56 days' after the child's death at least one week's written notice should be given. Any cancelled leave can be taken later by giving notice again.

Other Forms of Support

In addition to Parental Bereavement Leave, an employee may wish to consider options such as requesting unpaid leave or annual leave in order to extend their period of absence. This should be discussed and agreed with their Line Manager.

The University also provides an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is an independent, free, confidential support and counselling service called Confidential Care. This is a telephone service that can be accessed at any time of the day or night and is available 365 days of the year. Details can be found on the University website at:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/WorkingatReading/well/well-eap.aspx>

These guidelines outline the University's approach to handling Parental Bereavement Leave.

Please refer to your HR Partner/Adviser if you require further advice.

Version 2: 14 October 2021

Date of review	Details of any update	Reviewed by
14 October 2021	Annual review. Statutory rate of pay updated. Inclusion of information in relation to cancelling a period of leave.	HSL