

A quick guide to Compassionate, Time off for Dependents & Bereavement leave

There is often confusion around compassionate, bereavement and time off for dependents. This guide should help you understand the differences.

Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave helps you cope with the death of a close relative or friend and deal with all the necessary arrangements and attend their funeral. It may also be granted in the case of a relative being seriously or critically ill.

As it stands, an organisation doesn't actually have any legal obligation to offer their staff compassionate leave in the UK, although most organisations will offer 3-5 days paid or unpaid leave. Always read the contract and company handbook for this information as many organisations vary.

Compassionate leave may need to be taken at short notice, without the employer having time to prepare for the loss in staffing, and maybe without a set end point for the return to work.

Time off for dependents

A dependent is a spouse, partner or civil partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on you for care.

Employees including part time employees can take time off to care for dependents. It may be that they have to: -

- ✓ Deal with a breakdown in childcare.
- ✓ Plan longer term care for children or elderly relatives.
- ✓ Deal with issues relating to a dependent falling ill, been assaulted, injured or been taken into hospital.
- ✓ A dependent has died.
- ✓ Arrange or attending a funeral.
- ✓ A dependent gives birth.
- ✓ Employee's child has been involved in a school incident

More information <https://www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants>

Employees have a duty to:

- ✓ notify the employer of their absence and the reason for it as soon as is reasonably practicable
- ✓ inform the employer of how long they expect to be off work.

The law recognises that there may be occasions when employees need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of their dependents.

Employees are entitled to reasonable time off, but each case will need to be judged on its specific circumstance.

There is no statutory obligation on employers to pay employees for the time they take off to care for dependents.

Parental Bereavements leave

An employee will be eligible if, at the time of the child's death or stillbirth, they were:

- ✓ the child's or baby's parent - either biological, adoptive or parent of a child born to a surrogate
- ✓ the partner of the child's or baby's parent

Biological parents are not eligible once an adoption or parental order has been made unless there was a contact order in place after the adoption.

To check if you are eligible go to; -

<https://www.gov.uk/employers-parental-bereavement-pay-leave/eligibility>

Refers to taking time off work following

- ✓ Death of a child under 18 years old
- ✓ Still birth after 24 weeks

You have the legal right to two weeks of bereavement leave.

This can be taken any time within 56 weeks of death, and you don't need to give your employer any notice in advance. You also have the option of taking your bereavement leave as two weeks in a row or two separate weeks.

Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay for an eligible employee is either the current statutory rate a week or 90% of their average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). Tax and National Insurance need to be deducted.

More information <https://www.gov.uk/parental-bereavement-pay-leave>