

UNISON's 2025 Bereavement Leave Survey

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary | 2 |
| Key Insights | 2 |
| Implications | 2 |
| Next Steps | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. Summary of key findings | 3 |
| 2.1 Awareness of Bereavement Policy | 3 |
| 2.2 Bereavement While Employed | 3 |
| 2.3 Workplace Policies | 3 |
| 2.4 Support at Work | 4 |
| 2.5 Who Should Be Eligible for Leave? | 4 |
| 2.6 How Much Leave Should Be Offered? | 4 |
| 2.7 Should Leave Be the Same for All? | 5 |
| 2.8 Pregnancy Loss – Statutory Right | 6 |
| 2.9 Flexibility & Timing | 6 |
| 2.10 Appropriate options for taking bereavement leave | 7 |
| 2.11 Appropriate window for taking bereavement leave | 8 |
| 2.12 Should employees be required to provide notice they intend to take bereavement leave to their employer | 8 |
| 2.13 Length of notice employees be required to give to their employer that they intend to take bereavement leave straight away | 9 |
| 2.14 Reasonable notice period employees should give for leave taken at a later period | 9 |
| 2.15 The form that notice should be given for bereavement leave | 9 |
| 2.16 Should employees be required to provide evidence of a bereavement to their employer | 9 |
| 2.17 What evidence would it be reasonable for an employee to provide | 10 |
| 2.18 Key Principles | 11 |
| 2.19 Summary Recommendation | 11 |
| 3. What Members Want | 11 |
| 4. Key themes from comments | 11 |
| 5. Conclusion | 12 |
| 6. Recommendations for Improving Bereavement Leave Policies | 12 |
| 7. Personal Stories | 13 |

Summary

This report presents findings from UNISON's Bereavement Leave Survey, which gathered 25,412 responses from members across the UK. The survey explored workplace practices, employee experiences, and attitudes toward bereavement leave, including pregnancy loss, and examined members' views on workplace support during these times. The findings reveal significant gaps in current workplace provisions and highlight strong support for legislative reform.

Key Insights

- **Demographics:** Respondents were predominantly aged 50–59 (39%) and overwhelmingly female (99%), reflecting the union's membership profile.
- **Policy Awareness:** Nearly half of respondents (30%) were unaware of any bereavement leave policy in their workplace, highlighting a significant gap in communication and policy clarity.
- **Leave Preferences:** The majority favoured extended bereavement leave, with 4 weeks (32%) and 2 weeks (28%) being the most common choices. A small proportion advocated for flexible, needs-based leave.
- **Pregnancy Loss:** There was strong support (over 90%) for introducing a statutory day-one right to bereavement leave for pregnancy loss before 24 weeks.
- **Workplace Support:** Many respondents rated current support as inadequate, indicating a need for improved guidance, mental health resources, and compassionate management practices.

Implications

The findings highlight the need for:

- Clear and accessible bereavement policies in all workplaces.
- Statutory minimum standards for bereavement leave, including pregnancy loss.
- Manager training and mental health support to ensure sensitive handling of bereavement cases.

Next Steps

UNISON can use these insights to:

- Advocate for legislative change on bereavement leave.
- Develop model workplace policies and guidance for employers.
- Launch awareness campaigns to ensure members know their rights.

1. Introduction

On 23 October 2025, the government launched a consultation under its *Make Work Pay* agenda to seek views on introducing a statutory right to bereavement leave. The proposals include extending this right to workers who experience pregnancy loss before 24 weeks. The aim is to ensure that employees have the choice to take time off or continue working following a bereavement, depending

on their individual needs. This review represents a key step in delivering the broader *Plan for Change*.

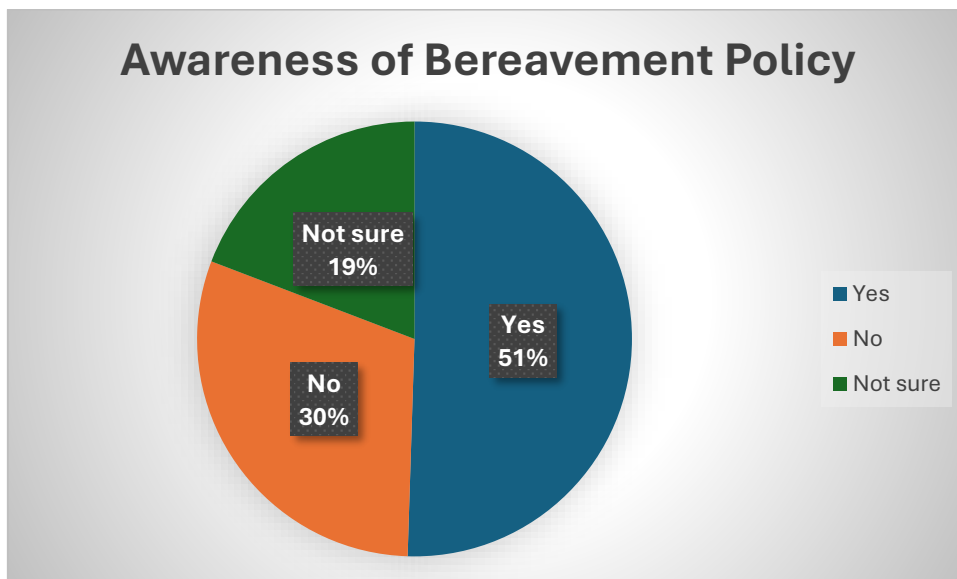
To inform UNISON's response to the government consultation, a comprehensive survey was undertaken to gather members' perspectives on the proposed right to bereavement leave and their experiences of taking leave following the loss of a loved one or pregnancy loss. The survey attracted 25,412 responses from members across a diverse range of sectors and regions, providing a robust evidence base.

This report presents the key findings from the survey and illustrates the lived experiences of our members. These insights are critical in shaping UNISON's position on the proposed reforms and ensuring that our response reflects the realities faced by workers.

2. Summary of key findings

2.1 Awareness of Bereavement Policy

- Yes: 50%
- No: 30%
- Not sure: 19%



2.2 Bereavement While Employed

- 86% have experienced bereavement at work
- Of those:
 - 65% took bereavement leave
 - 19% didn't
 - 16% said leave wasn't available

2.3 Workplace Policies

- Only 51% know if their workplace has a bereavement policy
- Of those who do:

- Just 11% say it includes paid leave for pregnancy loss before 24 weeks
- 78% aren't sure

2.4 Support at Work

- 66% aren't sure how adequate support is
- Only 6% say support is "very adequate"
- Most feel it's unclear or lacking

2.5 Who Should Be Eligible for Leave

- 80% say immediate family
- 70% include grandparents/grandchildren
- 60% include extended family
- 75% support leave based on the importance of the relationship, not just legal/family status

This reflects a growing recognition that the impact of bereavement is not solely determined by legal or biological ties, but by the depth and significance of personal relationships.

The types of relationships or roles that should be eligible

Based on the survey, respondents believe that bereavement leave entitlement should be extended to a wide range of relationships, reflecting the emotional significance of the loss rather than rigid legal or family definitions.

Respondents strongly supported eligibility for immediate family members (28%) (including biological, adopted, step, and half relationships), grandparents and grandchildren (24%), and extended family (21%) such as in-laws, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

26% of respondents advocated for the inclusion of "chosen family" and significant non-biological relationships such as close friends, foster carers, kinship caregivers, and long-standing companions, emphasizing that the title of the relationship is irrelevant.

A number of responses highlighted the need for flexibility to accommodate diverse family structures, cultural practices, and individual circumstances.

Overall, there was a clear call for a compassionate, inclusive, and person-centred approach to bereavement leave eligibility.

2.6 How Much Leave Should Be Offered?

For the loss of a loved one

- 7% of respondents think 3 weeks is about right
- 77% say it should be paid
- 2 (28%) and 4 weeks (31%) are the most common responses

For pregnancy loss before 24 weeks

- While 3 (30%) and 2 weeks (30%) are the most common responses, very few respondents used those exact phrases - most gave varied answers like “2–4 weeks”, “depends”, or “as needed”.
- 80% say it should be paid

Survey responses show strong support for a minimum of two to four weeks of bereavement leave, with flexibility to extend based on individual circumstances. While two weeks was the most commonly suggested duration, many respondents suggested for up to four weeks or more, particularly in cases of close relationships or traumatic loss. Some suggested up to six months for immediate family bereavement, emphasising that “grief is personal and cannot be measured by a fixed timescale.”

2.7 Should Leave Be the Same for All?

- 56% say yes – one clear entitlement
- 44% say it should vary depending on closeness of relationship

Survey responses show mixed views on whether employees should receive the same amount of bereavement leave for all types of loss and relationships.

56% of respondents said “Yes”, supporting a consistent approach that treats all employees equally and avoids making assumptions about which losses are more significant. This group felt that grief is personal and that everyone should have the same time to process it.

44% said “No”, arguing that leave should vary based on the situation. They felt that some losses such as the death of a child or partner may require more time off, and policies should reflect the closeness of the relationship and the depth of the impact of the loss.

Respondents highlighted scenarios that may warrant longer or more flexible leave arrangements due to emotional, practical, or traumatic factors, including:

- Loss of a partner, child, or parent, often cited as requiring extended leave due to profound grief and disruption to daily life.
- Pregnancy loss (e.g., miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, IVF loss, and medical termination), where both physical recovery and emotional support are needed.
- Sudden or traumatic deaths, (e.g., suicide, fatal accidents), which may involve shock, trauma, and complex grieving processes.
- Bereavement involving caregiving responsibilities, such as end-of-life care or managing funeral and estate matters.
- Deaths requiring travel, especially overseas, which may necessitate additional time off.
- Non-traditional or chosen family relationships, where emotional impact may be significant even without legal recognition.

While a majority (56%) supported equal leave for all bereavement scenarios, 44% advocated for customised leave provisions, stressing that “grief is not one-size-fits-all.” Respondents agreed that policies should be flexible and person-

centred, considering both the nature of the loss and the individual's circumstances.

2.8 Pregnancy Loss – Statutory Right

There was an overwhelming support (86%) for a statutory day-one right to bereavement leave for pregnancy loss before 24 weeks.

- Should cover:
 - Miscarriage (23%)
 - Ectopic (21%)
 - Molar (19%)
 - IVF loss (18%)
 - Medical termination (17%)
- Eligible people:
 - Person experiencing loss (41%)
 - Their partner (36%)
 - Intended parents (17%)
 - Other close family members (4%)
 - Other (1%)

Respondents believe that all types of pregnancy loss should qualify for bereavement leave. Each experience carries a profound emotional and physical impact, regardless of clinical terminology or circumstances.

Losses such as miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, and molar pregnancy often involve sudden trauma and medical intervention. Similarly, IVF loss and medical termination can bring complex emotional and psychological challenges, including grief, disappointment, and distress.

Survey findings highlight that respondents recognise the importance of compassionate support for every form of pregnancy loss. A fair and inclusive bereavement leave policy should acknowledge that grief is not confined to specific types of loss and ensure that all individuals affected have the time and space to process and recover.

2.9 Flexibility & Timing

- When should leave start?
 - 52% say it should be flexible
 - Others prefer from date of loss or date of knowledge
- How should leave be taken?
 - 48% prefer one block
 - Others want to split it into days or weeks
- When should leave be used?
 - 57% say within 8 weeks
 - 22% say up to 52 weeks (to allow for funerals, inquests, etc.)

Respondents shared that the most appropriate time for bereavement leave to begin is flexible depending on individual needs (52%), which was the most frequently selected option. This reflects a strong preference for a person-centred approach, allowing employees to decide when they need time off - whether immediately after the loss, around the time of the funeral, or later as grief unfolds.

Other commonly supported options included:

- From the date of death or pregnancy loss (29%)
- From the date of knowledge of the death or pregnancy loss (18%)

Respondents emphasised that grief is not always immediate and that practical responsibilities, cultural customs, and emotional readiness vary. One respondent noted, “People grieve differently and accept the news differently. Some have to travel for funeral arrangements. It's better to take leave within a certain period and depending on what suits the employee.”

Another shared, “Trying to pin a date on it and saying that's when bereavement leave starts isn't real life for many women.”

2.10 Appropriate options for taking bereavement leave

Respondents indicated that no single option suits all circumstances, but the overwhelming theme from respondents is flexibility. Respondents consistently emphasised that bereavement is highly individual and influenced by factors such as funeral timing, cultural practices, administrative tasks, and emotional well-being.

Main options considered:

- Leave must be taken in one continuous block. (50%)
- Leave can be taken discontinuously in units of one day. (21%)
- Leave can be taken discontinuously in blocks of one week. (19%)

Main highlights:

- Flexibility and individual choice were the most frequent responses, with comments such as “*depends on circumstances,*” “*case by case,*” “*whatever suits the bereaved,*” and “*should be agreed with the manager.*”
- Many respondents suggested a hybrid approach: an initial continuous block for immediate grief, followed by additional days or weeks as needed for funerals, anniversaries, or delayed arrangements.
- Discontinuous leave (by day or week) was widely supported to accommodate practical needs like funeral arrangements, travel, and administrative tasks.
- A minority preferred a strict continuous block for simplicity and planning, but even these responses often acknowledged exceptions for delayed funerals or phased returns.
- Several comments highlighted that grief could resurface later, so policies should allow leave to be taken within a reasonable timeframe after the loss.

2.11 Appropriate window for taking bereavement leave

Analysis shows that two options were most commonly prioritised by respondents:

- Eight weeks (56 days) (60%)
- 52 weeks (one year) (23%)

There were also a small number (3%) of suggestions for longer periods - 56 weeks or shorter periods (e.g., 4–12 weeks; (14%)), and many comments emphasised flexibility based on individual circumstances.

Main highlights:

- Eight weeks (56 days) was the most frequently chosen option (60%). Many respondents felt this was a reasonable timeframe to cover funeral arrangements and immediate needs.
- 52 weeks (one year) was the second most common choice (23%), often justified by the unpredictability of grief and practical delays such as inquests, cultural practices, or anniversaries.
- Numerous comments highlighted that bereavement does not follow a fixed timeline, and rigid windows could disadvantage employees facing complex or delayed arrangements.
- A recurring theme was that policies should allow flexibility, enabling leave to be taken when needed within a broader window rather than imposing a strict limit.

2.12 Should employees be required to provide notice they intend to take bereavement leave to their employer:

- 52% say notice should be given for immediate leave
- Most say “as soon as possible” is fine
- Any form of notice is acceptable (email, message, etc.)

I. If the leave is taken very soon after the bereavement (e.g., within the first few days or weeks):

- Survey finding: Responses were almost evenly split, with a slight majority saying No (around 51%) and a significant minority saying Yes (around 49%).
- Interpretation: Most respondents do not support a mandatory notice requirement for bereavement leave taken immediately after a loss, likely reflecting the need for flexibility and sensitivity during the initial grieving period.

II. If the leave is taken at a later period (e.g., several weeks or months after the bereavement):

- Survey finding: Overall, a slight majority (around 54%) supported requiring notice for bereavement leave taken at a later period, while about 46% opposed it.
- Interpretation: The overall trend suggests that respondents are more open to notice requirements when the leave is planned in advance rather than taken immediately after the bereavement.

2.13 Length of notice employees be required to give to their employer that they intend to take bereavement leave straight away

The overwhelming consensus (96%) from respondents is that employees should give notice before they start work on the day they intend to take bereavement leave, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter. This reflects the practical reality that bereavement is often sudden and unpredictable, making advance notice difficult.

A small minority (4%) suggested longer notice periods (e.g., one week or two weeks), but these were exceptions and generally related to planned leave for funerals rather than immediate bereavement leave. Other comments emphasised flexibility, noting that grief can be “*opaque and startling*,” so notice should be given as soon as the employee is able.

2.14 Reasonable notice period employees should give for leave taken at a later period

Respondents felt that a reasonable approach is to require one week’s notice for planned leave, while also allowing flexibility for employees to give notice as soon as reasonably practicable when advance planning is not possible.

2.15 The form that notice should be given for bereavement leave

Respondents showed a strong consensus for flexibility in how notice is provided. The most common view was that any form of notice is acceptable (55%), reflecting the need for compassion and practicality during bereavement.

However, several themes emerged:

- Allow any reasonable form of notice (15%) (e.g., phone call, text, email, messaging apps) to minimize stress for the bereaved.
- 26% of respondents recommend formal written notice via email, particularly for record-keeping or if the leave is planned in advance.
- 15% of respondents accept digital written communication (e.g., text, WhatsApp, Teams, Slack), often excluding phone calls as sufficient on their own.
- Others (15%) suggest an initial verbal or informal notice (phone or message), followed by formal written confirmation when possible and some propose following existing absence or sick leave procedures for consistency.

2.16 Should employees be required to provide evidence of a bereavement to their employer:

- 42% say no mandatory evidence
- 31% say a signed declaration is enough
- Only 10% want mandatory proof

Survey findings:

- The majority of respondents oppose mandatory evidence for bereavement or pregnancy loss leave.
- The most common preference (42%) is:

“No, but an employer should have the right to request evidence if they feel it is necessary.”

- 31% of respondents also support: “No, but employees should sign a declaration confirming they are taking leave due to a bereavement or pregnancy loss.”
- 10% of respondents favour mandatory evidence for the death of a loved one or pregnancy loss.
- A small number (8%) said “No” (no evidence or declaration required), and 8% of respondents were “Not sure.”
- Comments highlight:
- Sensitivity and privacy concerns—requiring proof can be distressing and impractical (e.g., delays in obtaining death certificates, early pregnancy loss).
- Trust-based approaches preferred, with minimal administrative burden.
- Some suggest combining declaration with employer discretion as a balanced solution.
- A few raised concerns about potential misuse if no verification exists.

2.17 What evidence would it be reasonable for an employee to provide

Respondents showed strong support for flexibility and sensitivity when requesting evidence. The most frequently suggested and generally accepted forms of evidence include:

2.17.1 Primary Evidence Types

- Death certificate (most common but often delayed and not always accessible).
- Medical documentation such as:
 - GP or doctor’s note/letter.
 - Hospital letter or discharge summary.
 - Medical certificate or fit note (especially for pregnancy loss).

2.17.2 Alternative or Supplementary Evidence

- Funeral-related documents:
 - Funeral notice, order of service, or confirmation from a funeral director.
- Pregnancy loss evidence:
 - Midwife or consultant letter, hospital paperwork, scan/photo, MATB1 form, or baby loss certificate.
- Other reasonable options:
 - Signed declaration from the employee.
 - Verbal or written confirmation to the manager.
 - Social media obituary or announcement (mentioned occasionally).
 - Confirmation from a trusted professional (e.g., undertaker, religious leader).

Respondents suggested that evidence should be proportionate to the circumstances and limited to what is practically available. Requests should be sensitive and avoid causing distress. Some respondents suggest that no evidence should be requested for close family bereavement or only requesting it where there is suspicion or repeated absences. Certificates can take weeks to obtain, so delayed evidence or simply viewing documents (rather than taking copies) may be more appropriate. Some respondents said that asking for intrusive medical details should be avoided, and to only request what is strictly necessary.

2.18 Key Principles

- **Flexibility:** Evidence should depend on circumstances and what is practically available.
- **Sensitivity:** Requests should avoid causing distress; some respondents recommend no evidence for close family bereavement or only requesting it if there is suspicion or repeated requests.
- **Timing:** Certificates can take weeks; retrospective evidence or sight of documents (rather than copies) may be appropriate.
- **Privacy:** Avoid intrusive medical details; only request what is necessary.

2.19 Summary Recommendation:

Employers should accept any reasonable official or informal evidence, prioritising compassion and practicality. Policies should allow discretion, with clear guidance that evidence may include a death certificate, medical note, or funeral documentation - but should not be prescriptive or burdensome.

3. What Members Want

1. Paid leave that's simple and clearly communicated
2. Recognition of chosen family and significant relationships
3. A statutory right to bereavement leave for pregnancy loss
4. Flexible options for when and how leave is taken
5. Trust-based systems with minimal evidence and practical notice

4. Key themes from comments

- **Flexibility:** Many respondents emphasised tailoring leave to individual circumstances rather than fixed durations.
- **Extended Relationships:** Calls for inclusion of "chosen family," close friends, and kinship caregivers.
- **Mental Health Impact:** Strong link between bereavement leave and improved wellbeing.
- **Pregnancy Loss:** Respondents stressed the need for compassionate policies and recognition of emotional impact.
- **Evidence Requirements:** Majority opposed mandatory evidence; prefer trust or simple declarations.

- **Training for Managers:** Suggested to ensure sensitivity and consistency in applying policies.

5. Conclusion

The bereavement leave survey reveals clear gaps in workplace support, with the majority of respondents rating current provisions as “Not adequate” or “Not sure.” There is overwhelming support for introducing a statutory day-one right to bereavement leave for pregnancy loss before 24 weeks, reflecting strong demand for legislative change.

When asked about leave duration for the loss of a loved one, responses most commonly clustered around 2 to 4 weeks, though many emphasised the need for flexibility based on individual circumstances and relationships. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of implementing clear, compassionate, and inclusive policies that provide adequate time off and recognise the diverse nature of bereavement experiences.

6. Recommendations for Improving Bereavement Leave Policies

1. Advocate for Legislative Change

- Campaign for a statutory day-one right to bereavement leave for pregnancy loss before 24 weeks, reflecting the overwhelming support from respondents.
- Lobby for inclusive legislation that covers all forms of pregnancy loss (miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, IVF loss, medical termination) and applies to both the person experiencing the loss and their partner and intended parents in surrogacy arrangements.

2. Develop Comprehensive Workplace Policies

- Campaign for **minimum standards for bereavement leave:**
 - **2–4 weeks paid leave** for the loss of a loved one, with flexibility for longer periods in exceptional circumstances.
 - **Separate provisions for pregnancy loss**, ensuring at least **2 weeks paid leave**.
- Ensure policies **recognise diverse relationships**, including chosen family, foster carers, kinship caregivers, and surrogacy arrangements.

3. Embed Flexibility and Compassion

- Allow leave to be taken **discontinuously** (e.g., in blocks or single days) to accommodate funeral arrangements and emotional recovery.
- Avoid rigid timeframes; include **“as needed” options** for severe or traumatic losses.

4. Improve Awareness and Communication

- **Train managers** on bereavement policies and compassionate communication.
- Provide **clear guidance** to employees on entitlements to reduce stress during bereavement.
- Include bereavement leave information in HR resources.

5. Enhance Support Services

- Offer **access to counselling and mental health support** as part of bereavement policies.
- Create **peer support networks** or signpost external resources for employees affected by pregnancy loss or bereavement.

6. Monitor and Review

- Collect feedback from employees who use bereavement leave to **evaluate adequacy and impact**.
- Regularly review policies to ensure they remain **relevant and** effective.

These measures aim to create workplaces that are compassionate, inclusive, and supportive during times of loss, improving employee wellbeing and retention.

7. Personal Stories

We invited respondents to share their views on the impact of bereavement leave for pregnancy loss on well-being and how to improve bereavement leave.

A. What impact do you think statutory bereavement leave for pregnancy loss would have on the workplace wellbeing?

improvement in wellbeing in mental health, increased focus, improved social relationships

I think it would offer a supportive measure for something that is not often spoke about

While it is likely to improve the mental health of the bereaved it is important to consider the effect on the moral of the staff team etc

The bereaved person would feel more supported.

Wouldn't make people feel ashamed for taking time off and would help employers to support their employees adequately.

It would be kind and compassionate, good to have in any work environment (and certainly lacking in mine)

Improve wellbeing

Person needs to feel supported

*No more than if someone went off sick. It would support parents
Give support to staff*

Knowing that your being supported

allowing staff to take time for themselves and their family should be paramount important

Could improve workplace wellbeing as staff who are facing difficult times may feel more supported and therefore may recover better from certain losses.

feel supported during a time of crisis

Some employees may be agitated by it, but a loss is a loss at the end of the day.

If people have multiple pregnancy losses it could have a negative impact towards the person from their colleagues

Peace of mind of being supported at a vulnerable time

I think it would improve workplace wellbeing, if someone is not fit to work they are not going to be able to contribute to the workplace.

good it should be statutory

Helps the team to feel that they can support the person if that is what they want

It should improve wellbeing, knowing the employer is compassionate

gives people time to grieve and process

Wouldn't be able to do the job to the best of their abilities

Leaves others to pick up workload, however due to circumstances I feel staff would not mind covering shifts

Everyone is different and time to get over there death

employees would feel supported during an already difficult time

staff will feel more confident that they will be supported in pregnancy loss

Help those dealing with loss and trauma be able to focus on processing that rather than worrying about work and finances. Would mean they feel better supported to be back into work sooner and feeling more prepared emotionally and physically after being able to take bereavement leave

Allow the individual grieve properly which is beneficial for mental health

Would offer the chance to improve mental health before going back to work

The team should consider what the person is going through and all pull together to cover their role, it's only for a short while

Need to be careful about how open teams or line managers are about an employee taking this leave, particularly for pregnancy loss as it may not yet have been common knowledge and the employee may need privacy and discretion. Overall, knowing that the leave is available is a great support and can improve wellbeing.

The feeling of being supported that the loss of a miscarriage is as distressing and upsetting to that of a full-term baby loss

There would be more support, and reduces stigma around pregnancy losses.

Grief is a difficult process and everyone experiences it differently. If people have the freedom to take their leave in a way that suits them, it removes a large element of stress and gives people more freedom to grieve in a way that helps them move through it. This could help people get back to work and be productive at work sooner than if they felt pressured to come back too soon and push through strong emotions.

People will feel more supported and more able to talk about their loss.

Low mood, sadness, empathy for staff member who has had the tragic event

People will feel more supported, as it will be understood that loss is loss

People feel valued and cared for

It would increase support and reduce stigma

Extremely positive

It might leave teams short staffed if there are people on leave

*I think it would make a huge difference and massively support wellbeing
Employees would feel supported and given time to process very difficult events.
This can help them come back to work well rather than pushing through and trying to work when they need the time off.*

B. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for shaping this policy?

Work places need to not make contact and cause distress when experiencing a bereavement

Managers should be aware of what the bereavement policies are instead of the onus being on the employee to navigate HR policies at a time of extreme distress. Managers should be trained in how to help employees back to work following a bereavement.

The ability to work from home for a set length of time if this is an option. Sometimes a bereaved person will welcome the distraction of logging into work and doing a few things. It also makes the return to work much gentler.

Everyone differs, so maximum flexibility. My organisation has compassionate leave policy - but not sure (due to size) if all managers are equally aware, or are deploying their own judgement. For anyone where the policy doesn't fit (e.g. if there is an extended period of absence) as a manager I usually suggested that their GP sign them off with "stress" to maximise their time off.

Would be nice for managers to have a bit compassion

There should not be a window of only taking bereavement leave once within a year etc. I have faced 3 bereavements this year and have struggled to navigate this with the current bereavement policies in place. In addition to this, more time should be offered as I was only offered leave as compassionate leave, not bereavement, which is dependent on manager approval/service needs and therefore could have been rejected.

I have recently returned from having bereavement leave following the loss of my mum and was allowed to take two weeks, I therefore had to take sick leave and annual leave until I felt mentally ready to return to work as a mental health practitioner a further 6 weeks, 4 weeks phased return and a further 4 weeks using annual leave reduced hours. It would have been helpful to have had a longer period of bereavement leave as my mums funeral was 6 weeks after her death- my employer was very supportive and worked with me to take the time I felt I required and have adapted my work accordingly on my return.

I think an employer should tell you about bereavement entitlement.

One of my jobs didn't mention anything regarding me losing my dad, had I known my entitlement I would have stayed off for longer. I felt pressured into returning to work

I think it's all depending on the closeness of the relative to that individual and that person reaction to it, Theres no point giving someone x amount of weeks if it's not effected them that much and they want to return to work

Management to acknowledge they loss and support them

This should all be considered on an individual basis as circumstances vary from person to person.

Consider everyone's feelings

I think employers need to consider typical grief period is 6 months however if death is sudden, traumatic etc this can be risk factor for delayed or complex grief which can last longer than 6 months. Provide support for staff e.g. ensure and at least offer the employee with bereavement counselling that is quickly accessed if needed.

After the death of my brother, I felt I was subjected to unnecessary questions about how / what he passed away from while I was clearly distressed. More sensitivity is needed.

Compassion when returning after your family has passed away and wellness check ups should be taken for at least every month for the 1st year.

Employers and colleagues think that because you're back to work it's all ok now. The grief has gone. The first year was the worst after losing my parents.

5 days is not enough for grieving a parent, child or spouse/partner we shouldn't have to go to the doctors to 'get a sick note' to be able to take longer!

As a line manager, most bereavement leave/support is highly inadequate and, if anything, insulting.

The length of time it takes to get a death certificate then to arrange registration and funeral arrangements

Bereavement leave needs to be longer than the current 5 days. It should be treated in line with mental health as the loss of a close relative is extremely difficult and impacts your mental health

Grief isn't linear or one size fits all and that needs to be reflected

I didn't know bereavement leave was available

It's probably quite difficult to define policies, as everyone will have different requirements when they are bereaved. A supportive and understanding line manager is very important, so probably proper training would improve it.

Every case should be tailored to the needs of the individual member of staff.

It should be at least 2 weeks. And more consideration on people who need to travel across the globe to attend the funeral.

more compassionate managers instead of cold hearted people in the roles

More compassion. Nobody needs to be worrying about financial stresses whilst navigating loss.

it should be mandatory, in fact it MUST be mandatory paid leave

Considering human centred practices and acknowledging the major psychosocial and financial impact of bereavement in one's life

Managers should strongly encourage bereavement leave for some situations to prevent further burnout down the line

I don't like that it is a set number of days dependant on the title of the person to you i.e. mother. Bereavement should be given dependant on the relationship to the person.

Have supportive employers

Bereavement is very individual to the person experiencing the loss. Managers should use their discretion

Currently, policy is that bereavement leave ends on day of funeral. I wouldn't want to go back to work the following day, if that was my husband, parent or child. I wouldn't be effective in my role.

It needs to be on a case by case basis. Bereavement affects people differently and this needs to be taken into account