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Bereavement Policy

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Version	Date of Update	Amended by	Notes

[Practice Name] recognises that bereavement is a deeply personal and often distressing experience which can significantly affect an employee's emotional wellbeing and ability to work. The practice is committed to supporting employees during periods of bereavement with compassion, sensitivity and flexibility, while ensuring that patient care and service delivery continue safely.

This policy sets out the support available to employees following the death of a relative, dependent or other significant person, including leave arrangements and pay where applicable.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the practice, including clinical and non-clinical staff, regardless of length of service. It does not apply to self-employed contractors unless specified within contractual arrangements.

Principles

The practice acknowledges that grief affects individuals in different ways and that there is no standard response to bereavement. Managers will approach each situation with understanding and discretion, taking into account the individual circumstances and the relationship between the employee and the deceased.

The practice will ensure that employees are treated with dignity and respect at all times and that support is offered in a manner that is appropriate and proportionate.

Bereavement Leave Entitlement

Employees are entitled to a reasonable period of paid leave following the death of a close relative or dependent. For the purposes of this policy, a close relative may include a spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, sibling, or another person with whom the employee has a close personal relationship.

In most cases, the practice will normally grant up to five working days of paid bereavement leave. This is intended to allow the employee time to deal with immediate matters such as registering the death, making funeral arrangements, and attending the funeral.

Where additional time is required, further leave may be granted at the discretion of the practice. This may be paid or unpaid depending on the circumstances. Alternatively, employees may request to take annual leave or unpaid leave.

In cases where the bereavement involves someone outside the definition of a close relative, the practice may grant compassionate leave depending on the circumstances.

Child Bereavement Leave

In accordance with statutory provisions, employees are entitled to parental bereavement leave if they lose a child under the age of 18 or experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to two weeks of leave. This leave may be taken as a single block of two weeks or as two separate weeks, and must be taken within the first year following the child's death.

Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay will be provided to eligible employees in line with current legislation.

The practice recognises the profound impact of such loss and will approach these situations with the utmost care and flexibility. Additional support and leave may be considered where appropriate.

Notification of Bereavement

Employees should inform the practice of a bereavement as soon as reasonably practicable. Notification should normally be made to the employee's line manager or the Practice Manager.

The employee should indicate, where possible, the expected duration of absence and any known dates such as funeral arrangements. The practice recognises that it may not always be possible to provide full details immediately and will remain flexible in such circumstances.

Additional Support and Flexibility

The practice recognises that the impact of bereavement may extend beyond the immediate period following a death. Employees may experience ongoing emotional or practical difficulties which affect their ability to work.

Managers will maintain supportive contact with the employee and may offer additional measures where appropriate. This may include a phased return to work, temporary adjustments to duties, flexible working arrangements, or access to occupational health services.

Employees are encouraged to speak openly with their manager if they require additional support.

Return to Work

On returning to work, employees will normally have a discussion with their line manager to ensure that they feel able to resume their duties and to identify any ongoing support needs.

The practice recognises that returning to work after bereavement can be challenging and will take a supportive and flexible approach.

Confidentiality

All information relating to bereavement will be handled sensitively and treated as confidential. Information will only be shared where necessary and with appropriate consent.

Equality and Fairness

The practice is committed to ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and without discrimination in relation to bereavement leave. Cultural, religious and individual differences in grieving practices will be respected wherever possible.

Abuse of the Policy

Any misuse of bereavement leave, including providing false information, may result in disciplinary action.

Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and reflects best practice within primary care.