**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT**

**LINE MANAGER GUIDANCE**

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Description automatically generated with medium confidenceINTRODUCTION**

Bereavement in the workplace can be challenging to manage. Every member of staff may react to a bereavement situation that they find themselves in differently and therefore the approach that is taken may differ between individuals. Below is a series of guidance which you can utilise to help support your members of staff through, what can be, a difficult time.

**GOOD PRACTICE WHEN MANAGING BEREAVEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Notification, and the immediate aftermath, of a bereavement**

Whilst there is some key information managers will need to ask a bereaved person, it is important to recognise that they may be feeling numb or distressed during this initial conversation, and may not be able to take in or provide much information. A follow-up call or email may be appropriate. A calm, empathetic approach in all communications from managers will ensure staff members feel supported and minimise their anxiety about returning to work.

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Description automatically generatedIn the early days of a bereavement, it is good practice for a manager to:

* Offer their condolences.
* Ensure the bereaved staff member knows they are not expected to work on the day the death has taken place. They need to hear that work comes second and that they must take what time out is needed.
* Begin a dialogue with the member of staff, asking how they would like to stay in contact. Is phone or email contact preferred? Are there particular times to avoid? Be aware that in the first few days, they may not wish to speak to anyone as they may be in shock. Be careful not to pressurise the staff member into making decisions at this point.
* Ask how much information they wish their co-workers to have about the death and remember that this information is private under data protection legislation and to stick strictly to the facts.
* Ask if the staff member wishes to be contacted by colleagues.
* Be conscious of diversity within the workforce and the impact this may have on, for example, days taken to allow the staff member to fulfil religious or cultural expectations such as mourning rituals.
* Be open to revising and reviewing the situation with the member of staff. Keep the dialogue open.

A hand holding a yellow flower

Description automatically generated**Managing bereavement and returning to work**

There are likely to be ups and downs, as the bereaved person adjusts to life without the person they lost. The full emotional impact of the bereavement may not be felt for some time after a death.

You may feel it beneficial to hold regular reviews with the member of staff to discuss and agree any strategies or adjustments which may be needed to enable them to return to work and to support them in the workplace after their return.

**IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF**

We want to ensure that staff members feel supported whilst going through any form of bereavement. Members of staff should be pointed towards the following support:

**Staff Wellbeing Confidential Support Service**

[The Staff Wellbeing Confidential Support Service](https://vivup.tercltd.co.uk/UK/EAP-Products.awp?P1=oA==&P2=E2NcvQ==&P3=2&AWPID467EB1D3=51E2F2D33ACFB3B88A5B3762BE36E1039772C57E), provides a [self-help workbook on Bereavement](https://www.selfhelpguides.ntw.nhs.uk/vivup/leaflets/selfhelp/Bereavement.pdf). Through this service, staff can also access 24/7 telephone support (Tel: 03303 800658) and scheduled telephone counselling from qualified and caring professionals.

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[Wellness Actions Plans](https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/) (WAPs) are an easy, practical way that individuals can support their own mental health at work, and as a manager, they can help you to support the mental health of your team members.

The Mind website has two guides available, both with a Wellness Action Plan template which you can fill in electronically:

* The guide for line managers is for managers or supervisors who are interested in introducing WAPs to their team members
* The guide for employees is for any member of staff who would like to try a WAP for themselves and introduce the idea of using WAPs to their manager or supervisor

[Download guides and templates for Wellness Action Plans for employees and line managers](https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/wellness-action-plan-sign-up/)

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The University has a network of [Mental Health First Aiders](https://staff.hud.ac.uk/oh/mental-health-first-aid/) across the campus who can help with advice and signposting for staff members who are experiencing emotional or mental health distress. The aim is to provide reassurance, promote and support the safety of the individual, and to signpost to professional help and support.

Information on the location and contact details for the University’s Mental Health First Aiders can be found here: [Mental Health First Aid - University of Huddersfield](https://staff.hud.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/general-health-and-wellbeing/mental-health-first-aid/)

**Stress Risk Assessment**

A staff member going through a bereavement may also experience increased feelings of stress in both their personal and work lives. A good tool to help support this in the workplace is a Stress Risk Assessment. You can find more information on the [Stress Guidance webpage for staff](https://staff.hud.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/general-health-and-wellbeing/stress/).

**Occupational Health Referral**

Where a Line Manager believes that a recent bereavement is impacting on an individual’s ability to undertake their duties within the workplace, a [Management Referral](https://staff.hud.ac.uk/oh/referrals/) to Occupational Health may be appropriate. Please speak with the HR Manager for your school or service should you wish to make a referral. You can find out who the HR manager for your school or service is here: <https://staff.hud.ac.uk/hr/contact/>

**Additional sources of support**

Coping with bereavement can be a distressing time for a member of staff. Whilst the above actions are all methods in which we can support a staff member within the workplace, there are also a wide range of support mechanisms externally. Below is a list of external organisations and charities that work both nationally and locally to support people through bereavement:

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* **Cruse Bereavement Care** - Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved people in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. They offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies, and work to enhance society’s care of bereaved people. Cruse offers face-to-face, telephone, email, and website support.

Website: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Tel: 0808 808 1677

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* **The Dying Matters Coalition** - Aims to raise public awareness about the importance of talking more openly about dying, death and bereavement. Dying Matters has produced a wide range of information about end of life issues.

Website: [www.dyingmatters.org](http://www.dyingmatters.org)

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* **Child Bereavement UK** - Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. Every year we train more than 9000 professionals, helping them to better understand and meet the needs of grieving families.

Website: [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Tel: 01494 568900

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* **Macmillan Cancer Support** - Macmillan Cancer Support have comprehensive information and guidance for both individuals and employers about cancer and bereavement at work.

Website: [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Tel: 0808 808 00 00

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  Description automatically generatedLittle Hearts Matter** - The Little Hearts Matter Bereavement Support Service offers parents the chance to link with other parents who know what it is like to lose a child because of a complex heart condition. They understand the pain of loss and the importance of being able to reach out to others to help them feel less alone.

Website: [www.lhm.org.uk/bereavement-support/](http://www.lhm.org.uk/bereavement-support/)

Telephone: 0121 455 8982

* **A picture containing company name

  Description automatically generatedSurvivors of Bereavement by Suicide** – This national charity meets the needs and breaks the isolation experienced by those bereaved by suicide. A self-help organisation which provides support via a range of means, including through a national helpline, via email and through running self-help groups.

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Description automatically generatedWebsite: [www.uksobs.org](http://www.uksobs.org))  
Tel: 0300 111 5065

* **Lullaby Trust** – The Lullaby Trust provides specialist support for bereaved families and anyone affected by a sudden infant death.  
  Website: [www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk)

Tel: 0808 802 6868