

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

Introduction

At Aspire Scientific, we acknowledge the personal nature of bereavement and grief and we are committed to supporting our employees in practical and reasonable ways. Compassionate leave is designed to help you cope with the death of a close relative, deal with necessary arrangements, and attend their funeral. It may also be granted where a close relative is seriously ill.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Informing the company of a bereavement

If you suffer a bereavement, or if a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, you should inform your line manager when possible of your intention to take compassionate leave. This may be in person, by telephone, email, text message, or via another person. Your line manager will establish whether your colleagues may be informed of your bereavement, and which details may be shared. They will also establish how you wish to be contacted over the next few days.

Following a bereavement or if a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, you will be entitled to the following compassionate leave.

Paid leave

Compassionate leave is paid leave that allows an employee time off to deal with their personal distress and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a member of their family dies.

Bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guidelines below are intended to show the paid leave an employee is entitled to in different circumstances. Not all employees will need to take the full allowance, and some employees will need additional time, depending on their relationship with the person who has died and the circumstances of the death.

In the event of the death or serious illness of an immediate relative, 10 days (pro rata) of paid leave will be granted. An immediate relative includes a spouse, civil partner, partner, child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent, stepchild, mother/father-in-law, son/daughter-in-law, sibling, or a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency. Compassionate leave may also be granted if a baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, and you have not carried the pregnancy (i.e. you are the partner). In addition, 2 days of paid leave will be granted to facilitate attendance at the funeral.

2 days of paid leave will be allowed on the death of an uncle, aunt, or cousin to facilitate attendance at the funeral.

At the company's discretion, paid leave may be granted on the death of someone outside the immediate family. The amount of paid leave will depend on the relationship with the person who has died and certain circumstances, including (but not limited to) situations where the employee is responsible for funeral arrangements or has to travel abroad or a long distance to attend the funeral. This paid leave is at the discretion of the company. Please contact your line manager if you require time off following the death of someone outside your immediate family.

Line managers have the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances regarding the length of paid leave granted. Leave days do not have to be taken consecutively.

Annual leave

In the event of a bereavement or the serious illness of an immediate family member, you will be able to take unpaid leave or annual leave at short notice to supplement your compassionate leave. Requests should be made to your line manager. If you suffer a family bereavement while on annual leave you can convert your annual leave into compassionate leave and take your annual leave at a future date.

Unpaid leave

If you are unable to return to work following a period of compassionate leave, you should contact your line manager. It may be appropriate to take a period of annual leave, or we may at our discretion grant you unpaid leave.

Following any period of annual or unpaid leave after compassionate leave, additional leave will be managed according to our sickness policy.

Return to work

In certain circumstances, a full return to work may not be possible following the death or serious illness of an immediate relative, for example, when the employee's grief is likely to impact on their ability to perform their role, where new childcare arrangements must be sourced, or when responsibility for the care of an elderly or infirm relative has transferred to the employee.

A return-to-work meeting in person or by telephone will be held before your first day back to discuss any reasonable adjustments that we may need to make to your hours or responsibilities. In some instances, you may be allowed to undertake a phased return to work on a reduced hours basis where practicable.

Employee support

Compassionate leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death or serious illness of a relative. However, the process of grief, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual.

If you have any concerns about the grieving process impacting on your work performance, you should discuss this in confidence with either your line manager or a director. Your line manager or the director will ensure that any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and that you are supported in your return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that you had prior to your bereavement, if appropriate.

If you wish to seek professional help in coming to terms with a significant loss or a distressing event, counselling sessions with an independent counselling practice can be accessed directly through:

- Healthshield Employee Assistance Programme, (optional benefit offered after completion of probation).
- Axa private medical insurance, (optional benefit offered after completion of probation).
- Aviva Smart Health (part of the life assurance policy with Aviva and available to all employees)

You may also wish to consider contacting one of Aspire's Mental Health First Aiders (Jo Chapman or James Keane).

Culture and diversity

Different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways. Your line manager will check whether your religion or culture requires you to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would necessitate you being off work at a particular time. You should not assume that your line manager is aware of any such requirements and you should draw this to your line manager's attention as soon as possible.

Line managers who are unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture should ask the employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.

Further information

Cruse Bereavement Support

[Home - Cruse Bereavement Support](#)

Mind: support and self care for bereavement

[Support and self-care for grief - Mind](#)

Sue Ryder Online Bereavement Support

[Sue Ryder's Online Bereavement Support | Sue Ryder](#)

Aspire Scientific HR

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