

Issue Number: 1

Issue Date: 11/22

Review Date: 11/24

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Pregnancy Loss Policy

For all council employees.



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Renfrewshire Council is committed to the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge, enhancing the support to staff experiencing pregnancy loss including providing paid time off to parents experiencing pregnancy loss at any stage.
- 1.2 We will create a supportive work environment, having this pregnancy loss guidance in place to support the workforce and their partners back to work by showing flexibility wherever possible.
- 1.3 This guidance will help managers provide appropriate practical and emotional support to any employee impacted by miscarriage, ectopic or molar pregnancy (loss of a pregnancy before 24 weeks gestation).
- 1.4 You may be a manager with your own experience of loss or an expectant parent managing someone that has experienced a loss. So dealing with pregnancy loss-related issues may understandably be difficult. If this is the case, speak to your own line manager or HR&OD for advice or to direct you to the relevant part of the guidance. Further information, guidance and support, use the link below:

[Miscarriage and the workplace - The Miscarriage Association](#)

2 Pregnancy Loss Guidance

- 2.1 Pregnancy loss can be a frightening, lonely and traumatic experience for both women and men. It is often both physically and emotionally painful, with effects that can last for a very long time.
- 2.2 We recognise everyone's needs will be different. For example, some people may feel that they can continue to work as normal, while others may require more support. You may have your own experiences or opinions about the impact of miscarriage. Everyone will experience their loss differently, and it's important not to make any assumptions about how they feel or how they want to be treated.
- 2.3 Partners, as well as grandparents and other close relatives, might be impacted by the miscarriage and you will need to consider how best to support them if they work in your team. You may find it helpful to read the Miscarriage Association's information on: [supporting employees before, during and after a loss](#).

3 What Is Pregnancy Loss?

- **Miscarriage** – the spontaneous loss of a pregnancy during the first 24 weeks.
- **Stillbirth** - the loss of a baby from 24 weeks, during labour or birth.
- **Ectopic pregnancy** – when a fertilised egg develops outside the womb
- **Molar pregnancy** – when an abnormal fertilised egg implants in the uterus.

- **Neonatal Loss** – the loss of a live-born baby up to 28 days after the birth.
- **Embryo transfer Loss** – when an embryo transfer during fertility treatment doesn't result in pregnancy.
- **Abortion or termination of pregnancy**- a medical or surgical procedure to end a pregnancy.

4 If The Loss Occurs at Work

- 4.1 A pregnancy loss may happen at work. You may not be aware that an employee is pregnant. She is not obliged to tell her manager of her pregnancy until 15 weeks before her estimated due date, or as soon as is reasonably practicable after then (approximately 6 months pregnant).
- 4.2 If an employee suspects that she has started to lose her baby she may have bleeding, severe abdominal pain, and may be faint or collapse. She may be very distressed and panicked, embarrassed and frightened.
- 4.3 You can help by ensuring that she has very quick access to a toilet, and you may need to help her by calling her preferred contact or colleague to discreetly assist her in getting home or to hospital or a first aid room. In severe cases you may need to call an ambulance.
- 4.4 If a woman's partner, relative or close friend is told of the loss while at work, they may need to leave at short notice to provide practical and emotional support.

5. Communicating the news

- 5.1 You will need to consider carefully how to explain the sudden absence of your employee in order to respect their privacy, especially as they might not want others to know the details.

6. Special Leave

- 6.1 All colleagues who have been affected by pregnancy loss (including partners and those affected by loss through fertility treatment from the point of embryo transfer) will be eligible for full paid leave from day 1 of employment with the Council. This includes whether it happens to you, your partner or the surrogate having your baby. There is no limit on the number of times you can take it if you are impacted by more than one loss.
- 6.2 It doesn't matter how long you've worked here or how many hours you work, you are entitled to this leave with full pay. Up to **2 weeks** paid leave will be approved. Further time off can be supported in accordance with the Council's Sick Pay Scheme and Managing Absence Policy.
- 6.3 It's important that you contact your manager as soon as possible if you are impacted by pregnancy loss, so that we know what's happening and how we can support you. If you don't feel like you can speak to your manager,

remember we have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who can provide support. You can contact the EAP (Time for Talking) on **0800 970 3980**.

6.4 We would encourage you to let your manager know so that they can support you during this difficult time and help you return to work, however if you would prefer not to tell anyone please use the Managing Absence Policy instead. Any sickness absence that is recorded as pregnancy related does not count towards absence triggers.

6.5 If you have been affected as a family member (as a grandparent for example) and need time off to support your loved one, please refer to our **Special Leave Policy**.

7. Medical Appointments and Support

7.1 We encourage you to speak to a GP if you have experienced pregnancy loss.

7.2 We know that if you are affected by pregnancy loss you may need time away from work to attend medical appointments or to support your partner and that it may be challenging to arrange appointments around working hours. We will provide a reasonable amount of paid time off to attend appointments.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 If you tell your manager about your own experience or your partner's pregnancy loss, they'll keep this confidential and won't share this information unless you say it's okay – except if we've got serious concerns for your safety or that of others.

6. Counselling

6.1 You can access free, professional and confidential counselling 24 hours a day through contacting Time for Talking. The best way to access this is via the mobile app or if you prefer you can call them on **0800 970 3980**. More information about our EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) can be found at our Wellbeing Hub on Renfo.

6.2 If you would prefer to speak to someone who is specially trained in the kind of pregnancy loss you have experienced, you can contact one of the specialist organisations listed at the end of this policy.

7. Returning to Work

7.1 We understand how differently colleagues impacted by pregnancy loss will feel about coming back to work. We know that the experience will affect people differently both emotionally and physically. We also know that for some, the transition back to work may be challenging.

- 7.2 There might be reasonable adjustments we can make at work to help you cope if you find things difficult. These are temporary changes that your line manager will agree with you to help you adjust to coming back to work.
- 7.3 Your manager may do a risk assessment to understand more about how your experience might impact you at work and discuss any adjustments you might need. You can also use a Wellbeing Action Plan to identify how your experience has impacted you at work and use this to discuss any changes you might need with your manager.

7 Reasonable Adjustments

- 7.1 The reasonable adjustments we can make will depend on your circumstances, but the types of changes that might help could be:
- Changing your start time if you're experiencing disturbed sleep.
 - Providing more breaks.
 - Adjusting start and finish times.
 - Adopting hybrid working if you have a suitable role.
 - Making sure you've got easy access to toilet facilities.
 - Turning your camera off when on video calls.
- 7.2 Your manager might suggest that you speak to Time for Talking, to get some help and advice. They may encourage you to go to your GP for support if you haven't already. They might also ask you if you're happy to be referred to Occupational Health. This is so we can get more information about how your experience is likely to affect you at work, and what adjustments we can make to help.

8. Pregnancy loss from 24 weeks (Stillbirth and Neonatal loss)

- 8.1 The law and your rights are different if you are impacted by pregnancy loss from 24 weeks and our Council policies are different too.
- 8.2 If you are the pregnant parent and experience a stillbirth or neonatal loss you are entitled maternity benefits and do not need to use this policy. You can read more information **Parenting Leave and Pay Policy**.
- 8.3 If you experience the loss of a child under 18, including adoptive parents, foster parents and intended parents, support is provided in our **Special Leave Policy**.

9 IVF and Fertility

- 9.1 We understand that you may have unique challenges if you experience both pregnancy loss and infertility. We want you to know that this policy still applies if pregnancy loss occurs after you or your partner have had fertility treatment from the point of embryo transfer onwards.

10 Additional Support

10.1 There are lots of charities and other specialist support groups who offer information and support about pregnancy loss. Here are some that you might find helpful:

- [The Miscarriage Association](#) – an organisation which offers support and information for those affected by miscarriage, ectopic or molar pregnancy as well as signposting for counselling services.
- [Petals](#) – provides specialist support and counselling after pregnancy loss
- [Tommy's](#) - a charity that funds research into pregnancy problems and provides information for parents-to-be.
- [SANDS](#) can offer you support if your baby dies during pregnancy or after birth.
- [ARC](#) a national charity offering parents support through antenatal screening and its consequences, including bereavement.
- [Abortion Talk](#) - a new charity offering people the chance to talk about abortion in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.
- [The Fertility Network](#) – a charity offering resources and support for those affected by fertility issues.
- [The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust](#) – supporting people with early pregnancy complications.