



Bereavement Guidelines

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1. Purpose

This document aims to give Managers the knowledge and understanding of how to support colleagues who have been bereaved.

2. Bereavement experienced by a colleague

Compassionate leave is normally only granted in the case of bereavement in a person's immediate family. Please refer to the Leave of Absence Policy available on the Portal.

Who is to give support?

Support is to be provided by the immediate Line Manager. However, it is recognised that providing support is a demanding process and the immediate Line Manager should seek the personal support of another emotionally mature person with understanding of the bereavement process if necessary.

Support can also be provided by the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), details of which are available on the University portal. Managers can also refer to the Stress in the Workplace Policy for further advice.

In the case of a death of a colleague, it is also important to be aware of the effects of residual grief that Managers themselves may be suffering from, as this may affect the Manager's ability to help the recently bereaved person.

Timescales and help available

Every bereavement is unique and therefore it is not possible to estimate the time it will take to go through the mourning process. When someone close is lost the overwhelming grief suffered in the beginning may ease after a few days / week but the full process can take months and even years. The signs of progress are when the mourner experiences increasing periods of feeling normal.

If after a few weeks the mourner still appears to be overwhelmed by extreme grief, help could be sought from the EAP helpline or the family doctor.

Work

On a practical level the University needs to be sympathetic to the need for additional time off work, not only the funeral but the legal aftermath of death. The amount of time needed will vary according to the closeness of the relationship between the deceased and the employee. See Leave of Absence Policy.

Safety

As the levels of stress and tiredness are affected by bereavement it is important to ensure colleagues' safety if operating machinery or driving and avoidance in the early weeks of intensive or concentrated work, also awareness that people can be clumsy and accident prone. Some relatively easy, undemanding work could ease colleagues back in. Further information on safety and the bereaved can be gained

