



Department for
Business, Innovation,
Science and Trade



UK Government

Government response

Make Work Pay: Leave for bereavement including pregnancy loss

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Executive summary

The Plan to Make Work Pay sets out an ambitious agenda to deliver our Plan for Change by ensuring employment rights are fit for a modern economy, empowering working people and contributing to economic growth.

The government is committed to supporting employees through the most difficult moments in life. Grief is an extremely personal issue that people deal with in different ways. Managing grief in the workplace can also be difficult for employers. Employees may need to take time off work, their performance may be affected, or they may be temporarily unable to perform their role.

There is an existing statutory entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave, but this is limited to parents whose child under 18 has died or who experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. As a result, millions of employees that experience other forms of bereavement every year, including a pregnancy loss before 24 weeks, have no statutory right to take time away from work. While most employers respond with compassion and flexibility, in the absence of a statutory right some employees have been denied the right to step away from work to grieve.

That is why the government is introducing a statutory, day-one right to bereavement leave, establishing a protected period during which employees can take time away from work following a loss. The new right will provide greater support to both employees and employers. Ensuring that employees are guaranteed time off in some of the most difficult moments of their lives, and giving greater clarity for how employers can best provide support to their employees within these circumstances.

The government has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to shape this policy. This includes employees with experience of bereavement in the workplace, and employers with experience supporting their employees through loss. By seeking these views among others, we have gathered a balanced picture of how the entitlement should operate considering the needs of bereaved employees for time, space and support, and the needs of employers to support their employee while ensuring business continuity and reducing the costs associated with staff absences.

We received a strong response to our consultation with over 1,900 responses from a broad range of individuals, employers and other stakeholders. Respondents provided detailed insights on how the entitlement should work in practice, including eligibility, when and how leave can be taken, and notice and evidence requirements. The government is thankful to all those who provided a response to our consultation and their insights have been instrumental in developing the final leave entitlement.

We will implement secondary legislation to bring the bereavement leave entitlement into force.

Key elements of the entitlement will include:

- eligibility for pregnancy loss: Leave will be available to employees who experience all types of pregnancy loss before 24 weeks (including terminations and IVF embryo transfer loss). Leave will be available to the person who experienced the pregnancy loss, the other biological parent, partners, and intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement
- eligibility for other loved ones: Leave will be available to employees who experience a bereavement of their spouse, partner (cohabiting and non-cohabiting), parents, adult children, siblings (biological, adopted, step and half), and equivalent parental relationships for those raised in kinship arrangements or by foster carers
- when and how leave can be taken: Employees can take up to two weeks of leave, based on their average working pattern. Leave can be taken within 56 weeks of the bereavement, and it can be taken in discontinuous, single days. The leave period starts from the date of death or pregnancy loss, or the date of knowledge
- notice requirements: Notice can be given as soon as reasonably practicable, the same day if taken within the first eight weeks of bereavement, and one week's notice thereafter. Any form of notice is acceptable
- evidence requirements: There are no evidence requirements for this entitlement

The government recognises that creating a new statutory entitlement alone is not enough to encourage and ensure better bereavement support and outcomes for both employees and employers. The government will publish guidance to support employers to implement bereavement leave, support their staff, and to help individuals understand and access their rights. We will also evaluate how best we can support bereaved people in the workplace to encourage better bereavement outcomes for all not just those that are captured by this entitlement.

Introduction

Currently, only employees who lose a child have a statutory entitlement to time off from work for bereavement. Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay is available to bereaved employees if they or their partner lose a child up to the age of 18 or have a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, provided they meet certain eligibility criteria. This provides up to two weeks of paid leave that can be taken in one-week blocks, either consecutively or separately, within 56 weeks of the child's death.

In cases where a child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, employed parents may also be entitled to statutory maternity, paternity and shared parental leave and pay, provided they meet certain eligibility criteria. Statutory Sick Pay is available to employees who experience physical symptoms associated with pregnancy loss, subject to the usual eligibility criteria. Absences taken for this reason are treated as protected sickness, meaning they are not counted towards sickness absence totals.

Employees are also entitled to reasonable time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant (also known as 'time off for dependants'). A dependant includes a spouse, civil partner, child, or parent of the employee, someone who lives with the employee (but is not their tenant, lodger, boarder or employee), or anyone who reasonably relies on the employee to provide certain types of assistance or care. This entitlement includes a right to take reasonable time off to take action that is necessary following a dependant's death, such as making funeral arrangements. An employer must not treat their employee unfairly for taking time off or refuse reasonable time off in these circumstances. However, it does not cover time off specifically for bereavement or to grieve.

Most employers act flexibly and sensitively to requests for time off from employees experiencing bereavement – for example through compassionate or special leave schemes. However, employer responses vary considerably, and not all bereaved employees are given this support.

Through the Employment Rights Act 2025 the government has introduced a new day-one right to unpaid bereavement leave for employees who experience the loss of a loved one, including pregnancy loss before 24 weeks.

The government held a 12-week consultation on the details of the bereavement leave entitlement which concluded on 15 January 2026. This sought views on the practical details of implementing this right such as eligibility criteria, length of leave, how the leave can be taken, notice and evidence requirements and other policy interventions. The government has now analysed the responses to the consultation and come to a decision on the final details of the entitlement.

The government is grateful to all respondents to the consultation and those who shared their personal experiences. The loss of a loved one is one of life's most profound and universal experiences. To have the strength to both process grief and

share such experiences is a testament to the strength of character of the hundreds of respondents who shared their personal stories. Their responses have helped to speak to the scale of impact this new entitlement will have, allowing those who experience a bereavement the security in knowing they have a legal right to the time they need away from work.

Individuals who are pregnant, or who have experienced pregnancy or pregnancy loss, are biologically female and most will refer to themselves using terms such as 'pregnant woman'. However, some individuals who experience pregnancy may identify as trans men or non-binary and prefer terms such as 'pregnant person'. This policy and government response is inclusive of all individuals who experience pregnancy. This document will use 'woman or person who was pregnant' or 'pregnant woman or person' for simplicity and brevity, to refer to the person who is or was pregnant.

Conducting the consultation

The Make Work Pay: Consultation on Leave for Bereavement including Pregnancy loss ran from 16 October 2025 to 15 January 2026 (inclusive). The consultation invited views on eligibility criteria, when and how the leave could be taken, notice and evidence requirements and other policy steps.

Throughout the consultation period, the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (BIST) engaged proactively with stakeholders through targeted roundtables with businesses representative organisations, trade unions and charities.

Methods of analysis

The consultation comprised of a digital survey to capture responses, with the option to submit responses via email and post. Responses were reviewed and analysed using a mix-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis was undertaken for all closed and multiple-choice questions to understand the distribution of responses. Breakdowns by respondent categories and demographic groups were also considered where appropriate to identify differences in views between respondent types. Responses to each question were optional, which allowed respondents to only answer questions they felt they knew the answer to or wished to opine on.

Respondents were able to select multiple options for question 1, questions 4 to 7, questions 9 to 12, and questions 13a to 15. Percentages for these questions are based on the total number of respondents and therefore do not sum to 100%.

These findings were used to inform policy development. The analysis set out in this response is intended to summarise the principal issues and themes raised in the consultation responses. It does not seek to reproduce all individual comments submitted in response to the consultation, nor does it cover matters outside the scope of this consultation.

Both the popular consensus and key themes were broadly used to inform policy development. The rationale behind all policy decisions is provided under the government response to each question.

Data handling and exclusions

To ensure the integrity of the analysis, several data-handling steps were applied:

- incomplete submissions - entries that contained only a name and/or email address, and did not answer any consultation questions, were not counted as responses. Any entry that answered at least one question and had been marked as complete by the respondent was counted as a response

- nonsensical data - responses consisting solely of random characters or otherwise invalid data were excluded from analysis
- sensitive and personal data – disclosure controls measures have been applied where necessary to protect the confidentiality of respondents for special category data such as ethnicity and religion. Response counts of less than or equal to 5 have been redacted and are displayed as “≤5”.
rounding - percentages presented throughout this document are rounded to the nearest whole number. Totals may therefore not always sum to exactly 100%

About the respondents

The consultation received 1924 individual responses. As part of the consultation, respondents were asked a small number of demographic questions to help the government understand the types of individuals and organisations who engaged with the consultation. These questions supported analysis of the profile and distribution of respondents.

Responses to demographic questions 1 to 3, which all respondents could answer, are displayed below. To view responses to questions 4 to 11, which were optional demographic questions dependent on respondent type, please see Annex B. Totals set out in the tables below are from the number of respondents that responded to each individual question, not the total number of respondents.

Table 1: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 1: Please indicate whether you are responding as: (An Individual, An Employer, An Academic etc.)”

Stakeholder	Number of responses
Employer	130
Individual	1,644
Business representative organisation	27
Trade union or staff association	29
Legal representative	Less than 5
Charity or interest group	32
Other	32
Academic or on behalf of academic/research organisation	18

Total	1,917
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Table 2: Business respondents by size to “Question 2: If responding as an employer, business, business owner, or business representative, approximately what is the size of your business? If responding as an individual or worker, what size workplace are you employed in?”

Size of business	Count
Large (250+ employees)	174
Medium (50 to 249 employees)	87
Small (10 to 49 employees)	52
Micro (1 to 9 employees)	40
Not Applicable	911
Total	1,264

Table 3: Responses by region to “Question 3: Which region are you located in?”

Business Location	Count
East Midlands	126
East of England	118
London	267
North East	68
North West	212
Northern Ireland	38

Scotland	133
South East	324
South West	205
Wales	61
West Midlands	151
Yorkshire and The Humber	154
Total	1,866

Responses to consultation questions

In the following section of this document, we provide a high-level overview of the key themes identified in consultation responses. For each thematic area, we provide the government's response, including how the feedback will inform the development of secondary legislation associated with the Employment Rights Act 2025. The full breakdown of consultation questions by respondent type is provided in Annex A.

Part 1: Eligibility

Eligibility for bereavement leave for the loss of loved ones

Question 1: Which relationships between the employee and the person who has passed away should qualify for the bereavement leave entitlement?

This question received 1,891 responses with respondents able to choose multiple options.

A majority of respondents across all groups agreed that immediate family should be included within the scope of the entitlement (84%). Immediate family includes partners and spouses, and biological, adopted, step and half siblings. While a majority chose 'title does not matter' (62%), consensus varied between respondent groups with trade unions and charities more likely to select this option (89% and 82%) than employers and business representative organisations (56% and 43%). The consensus was consistent across respondent groups for both 'grandchildren and grandparents' (44%), and 'extended family members' (34%).

Question 2: Please describe the types of relationships or roles that should be eligible

Those who chose 'another type of relationship not listed' (72 respondents), provided an answer to this free-text question.

Many noted that bereavement leave should not be restricted to an exhaustive list of relationships, as this could restrict access. Instead, respondents felt it should be dependent on the closeness of the relationship to be inclusive and accessible to all those who could need time off to grieve.

Similarly, the next most frequently raised theme was that chosen family and close friends should be included in the entitlement as individuals can often be closer with friends than their biological family - something highlighted to be particularly prevalent

among the LGBTQIA+ community. Others emphasised the importance of recognising relationships between carers and their dependents (including kinship carers and foster carers). These respondents highlighted the strong bond that can be formed in such relationships being akin to that, or stronger than, those with their immediate family.

Government response to questions 1 to 2

The government will legislate so that the following relationships will be eligible for leave for the loss of loved ones:

- immediate family members (biological, adopted, step, and half-relations), including spouses, civil partners and partners in a committed long-term relationship (cohabiting or non-cohabiting), parents, adult children, and siblings
- equivalent parental relationships for employees who were raised in kinship and foster care arrangements are also eligible

This strikes a balance between the needs of employees and their employers by defining immediate family relations in a way that reflects and is inclusive of modern family dynamics, and provides clearly defined relationships that are readily understandable. The government recognises that grief is individual and isn't limited to the relationships captured by this entitlement. Who this encompasses will be different for everyone, and everyone will experience and process grief uniquely.

It has always been the government's intention for bereavement leave to set a statutory minimum for employers to meet. We know that employers know their employees best and, as such, should speak with bereaved employees and consider going beyond the statutory minimum where appropriate.

Who should be able to take bereavement leave for pregnancy loss

Question 3: Should bereavement leave for pregnancy loss be restricted to the person who has physically experienced the pregnancy loss?

Out of the 1,911 respondents to this question, 'no' was the overwhelmingly supported option across all respondent types (93%). While only a small percentage of respondents chose 'yes' (7%), a larger proportion of employers chose this option (18%).

Question 4: If your answer is no, who else should be able to take leave?

This question received 1,767 responses with respondents able to choose multiple options.

There was overwhelming agreement across all respondent groups that all respondent groups listed in the consultation should be included in the final entitlement; “a spouse, civil partner, the other parent, or partner (who is in a committed long-term relationship) with the person who physically experienced the pregnancy loss” (98%); “the intended co-parent of the child who was expected to be born (who may not live with or be in a committed relationship with the pregnant woman or person)” (76%); and the “intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement” (67%).

Of those who chose ‘another type of relationship’ (6%), respondents highlighted that extended family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, and siblings may take on a caring role for the child, even if not directly parental, and should therefore be included in the entitlement. This was highlighted as particularly prevalent for blended families.

Respondents also noted that those who experience pregnancy loss may require an extended period of time to recover and therefore may need a temporary carer to help support them during this time. It was also mentioned that single parents may need additional emotional support during the period directly after the pregnancy loss and therefore temporary carers should be allowed to take time off for this.

There was also support for anyone who is affected by the pregnancy loss to be allowed to take leave, thereby, allowing anyone grieving the time and security to do so.

Government response to questions 3 to 4

The government will legislate so that the following relationships will be able to access bereavement leave for pregnancy loss:

- the person who was pregnant
- a spouse, civil partner, the other parent, or partner (who is in a committed long-term relationship) with the person who physically experienced the pregnancy loss
- an intended co-parent
- intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement

The government acknowledges that pregnancy loss is an incredibly difficult time both physically and emotionally. It doesn’t just impact those who physically experience pregnancy loss, but their partners and those who were expecting to be a parent of the child. By allowing all groups beyond the person who has physically experienced the pregnancy loss to take bereavement leave, the government believes that it is striking the right balance of both recognising the devastating impact pregnancy loss has on parents and the impact this leave will have on business.

Eligibility for different types of pregnancy loss

Question 5: Do you agree that all the types of pregnancy loss listed below should be eligible for bereavement leave?

- a) Miscarriage**
- b) Ectopic pregnancy**
- c) Molar pregnancy**
- d) Medical terminations conducted in accordance with Section 1 of the Abortion Act 1967**
- e) IVF embryo transfer loss**

This question received 1,899 responses with respondents able to explain their answer in a free-text response field.

There was broad consensus across all respondent types that all the types of pregnancy loss listed in the consultation should be eligible for bereavement leave (92%). While a small proportion of respondents responded 'no' (6%), a larger proportion of employers chose this response (23%). A smaller proportion of respondents chose the option 'not sure' (3%).

When explaining their answers, respondents emphasised concerns about differentiating between different types of pregnancy loss and how this risked creating a 'hierarchy of loss', leading many to conclude that it would be more equitable to include all forms of pregnancy loss. Conversely, some respondents expressed uncertainty around the inclusion of IVF embryo transfer loss, with some unsure whether this could be considered within the definitions of pregnancy. A small number suggested that it should instead be covered under a separate entitlement.

Question 6: Are there any additional forms of pregnancy loss that should be included?

This question received 1,564 responses with respondents able to explain their answer in a free-text response field.

Whilst the majority of respondents across all respondent types agreed there were no additional types of pregnancy loss which should be included in the entitlement (77%), some highlighted several forms of early pregnancy loss that were not specifically noted in the government's definition of pregnancy loss, but that they felt should be included within scope (23%). Of those who said yes, the large majority highlighted types of miscarriage or termination that were intended to be covered by the government's definition (such as chemical pregnancy, missed miscarriage,

pregnancy of unknown location (PUL), recurrent miscarriage, incomplete miscarriage, loss of one or more fetuses in a multiple pregnancy, and specific reasons for terminations).

A small number of respondents suggested that earlier stages of IVF pre-transfer should also be eligible for bereavement leave, including embryo loss, embryo destruction and failed fertilisation; or that the entitlement should extend to other forms of fertility treatment such as IUI (intrauterine insemination).

A handful of respondents also cited scenarios such as failed adoption, infertility trauma or diagnosis and pseudopregnancy (phantom pregnancy) as deserving protection. However, these scenarios do not fall under the scope of the primary legislation.

Government response to questions 5 to 6

The government intends that: all types of pregnancy loss before 24 week will be included in the entitlement.

The government recognises that all types of pregnancy loss can be traumatic experiences both physically and mentally, and those experiencing them may need time off to grieve and recover.

Therefore, we will include all types of pregnancy loss listed in the consultation.

This includes...

- all types of miscarriage before 24 weeks including molar pregnancies, ectopic pregnancies and chemical pregnancies (non-exhaustive)
- all terminations
- IVF embryo transfer loss, meaning the unsuccessful outcome of transferring a fertilised embryo into the uterus during IVF treatment. This does not include IVF embryo loss pre-transfer

Some responses called for the inclusion of different types of loss that do not fall under those listed in the consultation namely, IVF embryo loss pre-transfer, other forms of failed fertilisation treatment and situations where no death occurs but loss is still felt. The government recognises that these circumstances may result in grief however they do not fall under the scope of the primary legislation (Employment Rights Act 2025) and so cannot be included.

Part 2: When and how bereavement leave can be taken

Duration of leave

Question 7: How long should unpaid bereavement leave be?

This question received 1,813 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

Across all respondent groups 'two weeks' was the most popular choice (59%). A significant proportion of respondents provided suggestions for alternative arrangements (37%). While a much smaller proportion choosing the option 'one week' (10%). However, a larger proportion of employers (33%), BROs (23%) and legal representatives (80%) chose this option.

Some respondents noted that if the length of leave is insufficient, employers will be affected by reduced productivity due to presenteeism (when an employee attends work but can only perform at a reduced level), and there may be a possibility that employees will need to go back on leave at a later point (such as sick leave) if they haven't taken sufficient time away from work.

Employers and businesses mentioned the impact that longer leave could have on their business operations and the associated costs around employee absences. Reflecting this, some employers supported an approach where the government sets a shorter statutory minimum, and employers should be able to have discretion in offering longer leave lengths to those that need it, such as if the bereavement was particularly traumatic or emotionally impactful.

Respondents who provided suggestions for 'alternative arrangements' suggested a range of options. Many respondents suggested that leave should be up to four weeks as they felt two wasn't enough to grieve and handle all of the practical arrangements that come with a bereavement, such as registering the death, applying for probate and funeral planning.

Other respondents noted that the leave should be flexible dependant on individual circumstance, or as long as the employee needs to recover from the physical and emotional toll of the loss. This was particularly highlighted for those who physically experience the pregnancy loss as this can often involve physically traumatic medical interventions depending on the type of miscarriage and length of gestation at time of loss. Other respondents also mentioned that the entitlement should be paid.

Question 8: Do you think employees should be offered the same amount of leave for all types of scenarios, and all relationships to the deceased, that you have selected above?

This question received 1,818 responses.

The majority of all respondents across all respondent types (72%), including employers (59%) and BROs (70%), chose 'yes' with a minority (28%) of respondents choosing 'no'.

Question 9: If you have selected “no”, what types of bereavement might require different leave arrangements?

This question received 560 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options, provide options for longer or shorter leave durations and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

There was no clear consensus across respondent groups. Across all those who responded to this question, excluding BROs and charities, a variation depending on relationship type for the loss of other loved ones was the most popular response (65% of all respondents). A majority of BROs (80%) and employers (64%) chose the option saying there should be a difference in bereavement leave between the loss of loved ones and pregnancy loss before 24 weeks. A majority of individuals (58%) and BROs (60%) also chose the option that bereavement leave for pregnancy loss should vary depending on the relationship of the bereaved person to the lost pregnancy.

Some respondents chose 'other' (12%), citing a few main themes. More leave for people who physically experienced the loss for pregnancy loss was highlighted due to this person having to both physically and emotionally recover from the loss under circumstances that can often be quite physically traumatic, especially for later stage losses. Some respondents called for a more generous and flexible leave allowance for those who were very close to the person who died and may therefore experience more intense grief.

Other respondents called for more leave for those who may need to travel to attend the funeral, particularly where journeys are abroad or long distances could make existing leave entitlements restrictive. Respondents also said that those who have experienced multiple bereavements or pregnancy losses in a short space of time may require more leave as this can greatly amplify the amount of grief felt by the individual.

There were arguments in favour of 'offering different amounts of leave depending on the circumstances and the employee's relationship to the deceased', allowing for the scope of the entitlement to go further and for the support to be tailored to those who might need it most. Some stated a tiered system may be more acceptable to some employers, as it creates a balance where employees can still access the entitlement, while limiting business disruption and associated costs where shorter periods of leave apply.

Overall, simplicity and consistency were recurring themes throughout stakeholder discussions and consultation responses, with the majority of respondents calling for equitable access to leave for all those eligible.

Government response to questions 7 to 9

The government will legislate to provide:

- up to two weeks of leave, prorated to the employee's usual working pattern
- for all types of bereavement including the death of a loved one and pregnancy loss

The government recognises that grief touches us all differently, yet universally demands time, space, and compassion to process and heal. As such, employees may wish to take all, some or none of the leave offered by this entitlement. By legislating for up to two weeks leave as a statutory minimum we are making sure those individuals who are most severely impacted by grief can take this amount of time if they need it.

The leave will be representative of an employee's average working pattern over two weeks. This means if you work Monday-Tuesday you will be entitled to four working days off whereas if you work Monday-Friday you will be entitled to 10 working days. This is in line with other equivalent leave entitlements and ensures clarity for both employers and employees.

A 2021 Sue Ryder report on grief in the workplace found that presenteeism, being at work but not being able to work at full capacity as the result of a bereavement, has significant impacts on employer revenue and profit, on employee income, and the wider UK economy costing £16 billion per year¹. The government believes it is paramount that employees are given enough time to grieve when they need it to allow them to return to work when they feel more comfortable, reducing the prevalence of presenteeism.

Some responses called for a longer statutory minimum length of leave and for more or less leave to be offered dependent on the type of bereavement. The government recognises that two weeks leave may not be enough time for all employees to fully process their loss and grieve. However, this entitlement seeks to set out a statutory minimum, it will be at employers' discretion to enhance the entitlement in length, as a number already do.

In such circumstances where an employee requires extended leave the government expects employers to work closely with their employees to provide the support they need. Employees may also be able to access paid sick leave (Statutory Sick Pay) where they are experiencing physical symptoms following a pregnancy loss, or ongoing impacts on their mental health.

¹ [07240 - Bereavement in the workplace Report A4 20pp.indd](#) – Sue Ryder 2021 Grief in the workplace report

Similarly, some responses called for the entitlement to be paid. We recognise that there is a delicate balance to strike between time off for work for bereaved employees and the impact on business. While many employers already offer paid bereavement leave, the priority of this entitlement is to ensure that leave is widely available to those who need it, while ensuring the impact on employers is proportionate. The legislation will form the minimum entitlement, as with length of leave it will be at employers' discretion to enhance the entitlement by offering pay, as a number already do.

The date from which leave can be taken

Question 10: For bereavement leave, which of the following options for the leave entitlement to begin would be most appropriate?

This question received 1,894 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

Across all respondent groups there was clear consensus for the date of knowledge of the death or pregnancy loss to be when the leave should begin (73%).

Comparatively, a little over half of respondents chose the option 'from the date of death or pregnancy loss' (37%).

Out of those who chose 'an alternative arrangement' (14%), a few key alternative options arose. Some suggested the entitlement should start from the date that investigation into pregnancy loss occurs as often someone can suspect a loss and require tests to confirm it, with the interim period being incredibly stressful. Others stated leave should cover anticipatory grief and start before the death of a loved one as people often grieve for their loved ones prior to their passing when they are terminally ill. Respondents also suggested that it should be for the employee and the employer to decide based on both the needs of the individual and business requirements.

Some respondents highlighted bereavement leave's potential to interact with sick leave and the need for a clear distinction as those who physically experience pregnancy loss can often require traumatic and intensive medical treatment with long recovery periods afterwards. Therefore, they stated taking sick leave should not exclude people from taking bereavement leave, nor should those eligible be forced to take bereavement leave over sick leave if there are physically recovering from pregnancy loss, especially because sick leave is paid and bereavement leave is not.

Government response to question 10

The government intends to legislate so that:

leave can start on the date of knowledge of the death or pregnancy loss, or the date of death or pregnancy loss.

The government recognises that, while for many the date of bereavement and date of knowledge of bereavement will often be the same, for some this will not be the case. For example, if there were a delay in learning of the death of a loved one and it was required that leave can only start on the date of death, employees could lose part of their leave.

For those taking leave as a result of a pregnancy loss, it would also be unsuitable for date of pregnancy loss to be used as a definitive date for leave to start because it is often very difficult to know exactly when a pregnancy loss occurred, especially without medical confirmation.

Therefore, to maximise accessibility to the leave, the government has chosen both definitions.

Flexibility to take the leave

Question 11: Which of the following options for taking bereavement leave would be most appropriate?

This question received 1,895 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

Consensus across all respondent types were broadly the same, with 'leave being taken discontinuously in units of one day' being the most popular option (42%) but not reaching an overall majority (with the exception of charities with 72% choosing this option). A similar proportion of respondents chose the options 'discontinuous blocks of one week' (32%) and 'one continuous block' (30%) although a higher proportion of individuals, employers and BROs chose these options when compared to trade unions and charities.

Respondents who chose 'discontinuous units of one day' highlighted the unpredictable nature of grief, noting that an individual may be fine one day and not the next. This option was seen as allowing individuals to take leave when they most need it. Others highlighted how individuals may wish to take single days to mark anniversaries, birthdates, attend funerals, or take time off to attend medical appointments related to continued ongoing treatment following a pregnancy loss.

Those who chose 'discontinuous one week' (32%) or 'continuous two weeks leave' (30%) highlighted the potential for disruption to employers if individual days are allowed and the need for employees to take continuous blocks of leave to properly grieve. Respondent sentiment also generally called for flexibility and collaboration

between employees and employers to work out how best to navigate the leave for both parties.

Of those who chose an alternative arrangement (13%), respondents suggested that how the leave is taken should be flexible and ultimately up to the bereaved person, allowing for employees to take the leave as and when they need it. Some respondents suggested a mixed approach, where an individual could take the first week of leave in one continuous block, and the second week could be taken in single days. They noted this approach would provide consistency for employees in the immediate aftermath following a bereavement, while still providing a level of flexibility to mark first anniversaries and other important dates.

Government response to question 11

The government intends to legislate so that:

Bereavement leave can be taken discontinuously, in units of one day.

The government recognises that grief is unpredictable. While many employees may need to take an extended period of time off immediately, others may need to take off time more sporadically as their grief comes in waves. Others may also wish to be able to take single days to attend funerals, or mark anniversaries or birthdays. The intention of this entitlement is to provide employees the option to take leave when they need it.

The government anticipates that for most employees, the majority of their leave will be taken in the immediate aftermath following the bereavement, but allowing leave to be taken in discontinuous single days ensures the entitlement can be flexible to individual needs. The government encourages open communication between employees and employers to agree leave arrangements that work for them both in practice.

Window to take the leave

Question 12: Which of the following windows for taking bereavement leave would be most appropriate?

This question received 1,896 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

While 'eight weeks' was the overall preferred window for taking bereavement leave (41%), there was no clear consensus within each respondent group. 41% of individuals chose 'eight weeks' vs 37% choosing '52 weeks'. A clear majority of employers chose 'eight weeks' at 52% but, BROs were split between the three

choices with the most popular being '56 weeks' (the same as Parental Bereavement Leave) with 39%. Finally, trade unions and charities were more likely to favour a longer leave window, with many in these groups choosing '56 weeks' (44% and 59% respectively).

Those who chose 'eight weeks' (41%) stated that grief was likely to be most prevalent in the immediate aftermath of the death, and employees should be encouraged to take the leave at this time. They also cited concerns around abuse if the leave window was extended further. Those who chose a longer window of leave stated that grief doesn't always affect someone immediately, and that there was a need for flexibility to facilitate this. Others stated that the leave should be able to cover anniversaries and significant dates as well as milestones such as the conclusion of a coroner's report.

Among respondents who chose 'an alternative arrangement' (10%), many suggested the window should start after physical recovery from pregnancy, allowing those who physically experience pregnancy loss to use sick leave for physical recovery without reducing the time available to take bereavement leave. Some suggested leave should be available before a death to allow them to spend time with terminally ill loved ones and to help process anticipatory grief.

Others suggested the leave window should encompass first anniversaries, appointments, time to make arrangements, days of significance and the physical recovery. There were also calls for more flexibility, with leave windows mutually agreed by employees and employers on a case-by-case basis. Finally, some who chose 'an alternative arrangement' explicitly stated favouring alignment with Parental Bereavement Leave (56 weeks) for consistency and administrative simplicity.

Government response to question 12

The government has decided that the leave can be taken within 56 weeks of the death, or knowledge of the death.

While this option received lower levels of support relative to the alternatives presented in the consultation, the government has taken into account the broader evidence base and policy considerations in reaching this decision balancing both the needs of employees and employers. As such, the government believes the 56-week window both provides the greatest flexibility for employees and the simplest form of administration for employers.

A 56-week window allows employees to take leave on important dates such as the first anniversary, birthdays or due dates, opportunities which a shorter leave window may not accommodate.

Similarly, a 56-week window to take leave aligns with Parental Bereavement Leave, ensuring consistency and simplicity for employers. This will minimise confusion

around administration of leave for pregnancy loss at the 24-week boundary ensuring leave is correctly allocated for bereaved employees.

Part 3: Notice and evidence requirements

Notice requirements

Question 13: Do you think employees should be required to provide notice they intend to take bereavement leave to their employer?

I) If the leave is taken very soon after the bereavement (e.g. within the first few days or weeks)

This question received 1,888 responses and respondents were able to explain and their answer in a free-text response field. The question sought views on whether advance notice should be required before an employee can take bereavement leave during the first eight weeks following a bereavement, not whether an employee should have to work a notice period prior to taking leave immediately after a bereavement. This means if respondents chose 'yes' they agreed that employees should have to notify their employer before they intend to take leave in the first eight weeks following a bereavement.

The majority of all individuals (72%), employers (63%) and charities (68%) selected 'no' for requiring notice of leave within the first few days or weeks (70% of all respondents). The majority of BROs (60%) and Trade Unions (57%) chose 'yes' for notice of leave within the first few days and weeks (30% of all respondents).

Respondents highlighted the unpredictable nature of grief and how providing notice may not be possible in the case of a sudden death. Those who chose 'yes' highlighted the need to give notice to their employer for business continuity even if it is immediate. Respondents widely called for any notice to be flexible, compassionate and for employees not to be punished if no notice was given.

II) If the leave is taken at a later period (e.g. several weeks or months after the bereavement)

This question received 1,888 responses with respondents being able to explain their answer in a free-text response field.

The majority of all respondent types chose 'yes' for requiring notice of leave taken several weeks or months after the bereavement (75%) with a quarter (25%) choosing 'no'.

With notice for 'leave taken at a later period (e.g. several weeks or months after the bereavement)', respondents cited the need for business planning and continuity especially in certain sectors. More broadly there were calls for parity with existing leave policies such as Parental Bereavement Leave for simplicity.

Question 13(a): (For those that answered 'yes' to I): How much notice should employees be required to give to their employer that they intend to take bereavement leave straight away?

This question received 562 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

There was clear consensus across all respondent types that notice for leave in the first few weeks or months should be 'before the employee starts work on the day they intend to take leave, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter' (94%). A small proportion of respondents chose the option 'other' (7%).

Respondents stated that such notice should be minimal and flexible to reflect the unpredictability of bereavement and grief, with others stating this approach would align with the pre-existing Parental Bereavement Leave entitlement.

Question 13(b): (For those that answered 'yes' to II): What is a reasonable notice period employees should give for leave taken at a later period?

This question received 1,396 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

Across all types of respondents, answers were more equally split on how much notice should be given to take leave later on. Among individuals (53%) and charities (46%), the most preferred option was that 'notice should be given on the day they intend to take leave' (49% of all respondents). Among employers (38%), BROs (48%) and trade unions (37%) the most preferred option was that 'one weeks' notice' should be given ahead of the leave (37% of all respondents). A smaller proportion of respondents chose the options 'two weeks' notice' (14%) and 'other' (8%).

Respondents stated that notice requirements for later leave should be flexible and managed on a case-by-case basis to accommodate the needs of the individual. Respondents also reasoned that leave should require longer notice to allow for employers to find sufficient cover, while others believed notice requirements should reflect pre-existing entitlements like Parental Bereavement Leave.

Government response to question 13

The government has decided that notice should be provided:

Before the employee starts work on the day they intend to take leave, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter for the first eight weeks of bereavement.

One week before the requested date of leave, for leave taken beyond eight weeks of the bereavement.

The government recognises that bereavement is often sudden and shocking. Allowing notice to be provided before the employee starts work on the day they intend to take leave, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter within the first eight weeks, both acknowledges the unpredictable nature of bereavement and grief, and allows for employers to respond as quickly as possible to both support their employee and implement contingencies for their business.

The government recognises the need for businesses to plan and implement contingencies to both support employees and their business operations. Therefore, the government believes that by requiring one week's notice for leave to be taken past eight weeks of bereavement will give enough time for employers to be able to plan without putting undue burden on the bereaved and thereby restricting their access to take leave for funerals, anniversaries, birthdays, and other significant dates.

Furthermore, this approach aligns with rules for Parental Bereavement Leave, which minimises confusion and ensures continuity in how both leaves should be administered for employers.

Question 14: If you think that notice should be given for bereavement leave, in what form should it be given?

The question received 1,715 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

The majority across all respondent types chose 'the same as Parental Bereavement Leave (any form of notice is acceptable)' (76%). Smaller proportions of respondents chose the options 'any form of written communication' (32%), 'formal written notice sent via email' (13%) and other (4%).

Respondents showed support for allowing flexible methods of communication, including text, WhatsApp, email, Teams, or a phone call - whichever the bereaved person can manage at the time. Many respondents highlighted that phone calls can be too distressing immediately after a loss and may therefore restrict access to leave, while others preferred calls for clarity. Overall, there was strong sentiment for a 'light touch', 'any reasonable method' approach to notice requirements.

Government response to question 14

The government has decided that the following forms of notice are acceptable:

Any/all forms of notice are acceptable.

The government acknowledges that the period directly after a bereavement can be incredibly distressing, and that requiring employees follow a formal procedure to notify their employer they've had a bereavement and wish to take leave could inhibit or prevent people from being able to take this leave when they need it most.

The government believes that allowing any form of notice is proportional and strikes the right balance between the needs of businesses to plan around staff absences, while giving employees the flexibility to notify their employer in a way that best suits their needs at a sensitive time.

Evidence requirements

Question 15: For bereavement leave do you think that employees should be required to provide evidence of a bereavement to their employer?

This question received 1,910 responses with respondents being able to choose multiple options and explain their answer in a free-text response field.

A majority of individuals (50%), employers (55%) and BROs (71%) chose that 'evidence should not be required but an employer should have the right to request evidence if they feel it is necessary' (49% of total respondents).

The most preferred option for charity's (40%) was 'no, but employees should be required to sign a declaration that they are eligible to take bereavement leave, and the reason they are taking leave is due to a bereavement or pregnancy loss' (38% of total respondents). A majority of TUs (54%) chose that no evidence should be required. A small proportion of respondents chose the options 'not sure' (4%) and 'another option not listed here' (2%).

Those who selected 'no', that evidence should not be required to take bereavement leave (17%), noted that to request evidence would be intrusive and inflict an additional burden at an already stressful time.

However, those who selected 'yes', that evidence should be required or employers should be able to request it (6%), noted there need to be safeguards in place to protect employers from the entitlement being abused.

Question 16: If you think an employee should provide evidence, or an employer should be allowed to request it in order to take bereavement leave, what evidence would it be reasonable for an employee to provide?

Respondents were invited to provide their answer in a free-text response field. Out of the 905 responses to this question:

A few key sources of evidence proposed by respondents were cited repeatedly. For the deaths of loved ones: death certificates; orders of service from a funeral; newspaper/social media obituaries; evidence of funeral arrangements.

For pregnancy loss various forms of medical evidence were referenced to such as a doctor's note, a fertility clinic note, ultrasounds or pregnancy tests, and discharge notes.

However, many respondents outlined potential issues that would arise if employees were required to provide evidence to take bereavement leave. Firstly, in the context of pregnancy loss, many respondents noted in the consultation that it can be very difficult to source evidence for pregnancy loss, especially where a pregnancy loss happens early in the pregnancy. Therefore, there are many instances where employees may not have medical proof to give their employer to take bereavement leave.

Question 17: Do you have a view on timescales in which an employee should be required to provide evidence?

Respondents were invited to provide their answer in a free-text response field. Out of the 896 respondents:

The top themes suggested by respondents who thought evidence should be required were that employees should not be required to provide it in the immediate days following a bereavement or prior to taking leave, as this would be insensitive and creates an unnecessary administrative burden at a distressing time. Others thought that, if required, employees should be able to provide evidence retrospectively after they have taken leave. Others suggested evidence could be required within the first few weeks to a month after the bereavement.

Some respondents felt evidence should be provided as soon as is practically reasonable, with no strict time frame. This would allow flexibility where there are delays in obtaining documents such as death certificates (particularly where an investigation into the cause of death was required), and would better accommodate employees who need additional time to gather acceptable evidence.

Others called for evidence requirements that reflect Parental Bereavement Leave, which does not require evidence under any circumstances.

Government response to questions 15 to 17

The government has decided that:

Employees should not have to provide evidence of a bereavement to their employer to be able to access leave.

While recognising that a small number of respondents to the consultation cited concerns around abuse of the entitlement, the government believes that requiring

evidence to be provided would put an undue burden onto employees and restrict access to bereavement leave. Other family leave entitlements such as Parental Bereavement Leave, Carers Leave, and Neonatal Care Leave, do not require evidence to take leave but require a declaration from the employee when claiming pay.

The government acknowledges that employees may struggle in certain situations to provide evidence if required. For early pregnancy loss there is often very little to no evidence that the loss has occurred, and medical treatment may not be necessary. If medical evidence is available there would also be privacy concerns around disclosing this to employers, especially if it is the partner who is trying to access leave and not the person who physically experienced the pregnancy loss. There may also be problems with providing evidence if a loss has occurred overseas, which may lead to delays in official documentation.

Part 4: Other policy steps

Question 18: Do you have views on other steps the Department could take to help employers implementing the new statutory bereavement leave and support their employees?

Respondents were invited to provide their answer in a free-text response field. Out of the 878 respondents:

Responses reflected three main recurring themes: 1) that there should be clear, detailed guidance for both employees and employers, 2) that there should be training offered to line managers and HR professionals to teach best practice when supporting a bereaved colleague and finally, 3) that the entitlement should be paid.

Employers and employees suggested guidance should signpost to relevant charities and organisations who can offer support, and that employees should be offered tools and support when experiencing bereavement, including the provision of counselling or signposting how mental health support could be accessed.

Respondents brought up the need for support when on leave and returning to work, whether that be through phased returns, flexible working arrangement, or contact restrictions while on leave.

There were calls for government to highlight and promote best practices with case studies, as well as conversation guides for employers who are unsure how to speak to bereaved employees in a supportive, productive way, and for these to be published alongside official guidance. Others felt requiring employers to have a bereavement policy in place that's readily accessible would support employees and minimise some administrative burden.

The desire for cultural change, both within workplaces and in wider society, was highlighted by many. Efforts to raise awareness of how bereavement and pregnancy loss can impact individuals were suggested as a way to help normalise grief and reduce stigma around pregnancy loss. Some said this could be done in a publicity campaign and others by distributing written material to places bereaved adults are likely to be, such as hospitals, coroners' offices, and funeral homes.

Clarification within official guidance regarding how bereavement leave should interact with Statutory Sick Pay and other employee entitlements was also frequently called for to help ensure employers will not expect or force bereaved employees to take unpaid bereavement leave while they qualify for, and should be taking, sick leave.

Finally, a small minority of respondents cited concerns about the entitlement, stating it may be abused or wasn't needed, or that the impact on employers would be too high.

Government response to question 18

The government will publish guidance alongside the implementation of Bereavement Leave to ensure that both employers and employees are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The government will also continue to explore how we can support bereaved people in employment, including those who fall inside the scope of the entitlement.

We will work with stakeholders to understand the possible risk of abuse and explore avenues to mitigate this within the regulations or with other policy interventions.

The government acknowledges the calls for this entitlement to be paid. However, bereavement leave is a statutory minimum entitlement and will be unpaid. It will be up to employers if they wish to enhance the leave with increased length or pay. The government encourages and supports employers going beyond this statutory minimum.

Conclusion and next steps

The government would like to thank all respondents for their submissions to this consultation.

The government is committed to providing employees with an entitlement that provides the time, space, and compassion to process and heal that a bereavement demands.

Following this government consultation response, we will:

- implement secondary legislation, with measures coming into force in April 2027
- publish guidance for employers and employees detailing their rights and responsibilities

Annex A: Responses to consultation questions – breakdown by respondent type

The tables in this annex show the percentage of respondents who selected each response option for every consultation question. Results are presented both for all respondents combined and by respondent type, indicating the proportion of each respondent group that selected a given answer. As many questions allowed respondents to select more than one option, percentages may not sum to 100%. A small number of consultation responses did not indicate their respondent type – these are not included in the respondent breakdown but are included in the ‘All’ column.

Table 4: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 1: Which relationships between the employee and the person who has passed away should qualify for the bereavement leave entitlement? Please select all that apply.

- A) Immediate family members (including biological, adopted, step, half), for example, spouses, civil partners and partners in a committed long-term relationship, parents, adult children, siblings**
- B) Grandparents and grandchildren**
- C) Extended family members, for example, in-laws (mother/father/sibling/child), aunts, uncles and cousins, niece/nephew**
- D) Title doesn’t matter, it should be based on the importance that person played in their life (for example, foster carers or “chosen family” including close friends, kinship caregivers)**
- E) Another type of relationship not listed above”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	84%	85%	81%	91%	83%	43%	79%	100%	79%
B	44%	44%	48%	48%	44%	32%	46%	100%	45%
C	34%	35%	32%	30%	33%	32%	36%	75%	24%
D	62%	62%	56%	43%	72%	89%	82%	75%	62%
E	4%	3%	6%	13%	17%	11%	11%	0%	14%

Table 5: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 3: Should bereavement leave for pregnancy loss be restricted to the person who has physically experienced the pregnancy loss?”

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
Yes	7%	6%	18%	8%	11%	3%	3%	0%	10%
No	93%	94%	82%	92%	89%	97%	97%	100%	90%

Table 6: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 4: If your answer is no, who else should be able to take leave? Please select all that apply and/or suggest others:

- A) A spouse, civil partner, the other parent, or partner (who is in a committed long-term relationship) with the person who physically experienced the pregnancy loss**
- B) The intended co-parent of the child who was expected to be born (who may not live with or be in a committed relationship with the pregnant woman or person) This could include ex-partners.**
- C) Intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement**
- D) Another type of relationship not listed above (please specify)”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	98%	98%	100%	100%	94%	96%	100%	100%	96%
B	76%	76%	69%	95%	94%	93%	85%	75%	70%
C	67%	66%	71%	90%	75%	93%	78%	75%	70%
D	6%	5%	3%	14%	19%	32%	11%	0%	4%

Table 7: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 5: Do you agree that all the types of pregnancy loss listed above by the government should be eligible for bereavement leave?”

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
Yes	92%	94%	71%	81%	89%	96%	96%	100%	69%
No	6%	4%	23%	5%	11%	0%	4%	0%	21%
Not sure	3%	2%	6%	14%	0%	4%	0%	0%	10%

Table 8: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 6: Are there any additional forms of pregnancy loss that should be included?”

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
Yes	23%	23%	12%	32%	53%	70%	35%	0%	19%
No	77%	77%	88%	59%	47%	22%	60%	100%	81%
Not sure	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	9%	5%	0%	0%

Table 9: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 7: How long should unpaid bereavement leave be?”

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
1 week	10%	7%	33%	23%	6%	11%	6%	80%	15%
2 weeks	59%	60%	49%	45%	59%	71%	65%	40%	52%
Alternative arrangement	37%	39%	21%	32%	53%	25%	32%	0%	37%

Table 10: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 8: Do you think employees should be offered the same amount of leave for all types of scenarios, and all relationships to the deceased, that you have selected above?”

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
No	28%	27%	41%	30%	11%	13%	31%	40%	39%
Yes	72%	73%	59%	70%	89%	88%	69%	60%	61%

Table 11: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 9: If you have selected “no”, what types of bereavement might require different leave arrangements? Please select all that apply and/or suggest others:

- A) Bereavement leave for other loved ones should vary depending on the type of relationship (e.g. longer for close family than for grandparents or extended family)**
- B) Bereavement leave for other loved ones should be different from bereavement leave for pregnancy loss**
- C) Bereavement leave for pregnancy loss should vary depending on the relationship of the bereaved person to the child who had been expected to be born**
- D) Other”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	65%	66%	70%	40%	50%	50%	22%	100%	45%
B	45%	43%	64%	80%	0%	0%	33%	50%	55%
C	56%	58%	43%	60%	0%	0%	22%	50%	55%
D	12%	11%	13%	0%	50%	50%	33%	0%	27%

Table 12: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 10: For bereavement leave, which of the following options for the leave entitlement to begin would be most appropriate?”

- A) From the date of death or pregnancy loss**
- B) The date of knowledge of the death or pregnancy loss**
- C) An alternative arrangement (please describe)."**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	37%	38%	39%	33%	33%	11%	30%	40%	23%
B	73%	74%	63%	63%	72%	85%	63%	60%	70%
C	14%	13%	10%	17%	33%	15%	27%	0%	27%

Table 13: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 11: Which of the following options for taking bereavement leave would be most appropriate?”

- A) Leave must be in one continuous block**
- B) Leave can be taken discontinuously, in blocks of one week**
- C) Leave can be taken discontinuously, in units of one day**
- D) An alternative arrangement (please describe)."**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	30%	32%	24%	14%	0%	7%	3%	60%	20%
B	32%	34%	27%	23%	6%	7%	17%	0%	30%
C	42%	41%	41%	45%	83%	46%	72%	40%	40%
D	13%	12%	11%	27%	22%	43%	14%	0%	23%

Table 14: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 12: Which of the following windows for taking bereavement leave would be most appropriate?”

- A) Eight weeks (56 days)**
- B) 52 weeks (one year)**
- C) 56 weeks**
- D) Other – please specify.”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	41%	41%	52%	30%	22%	11%	9%	60%	31%
B	34%	37%	16%	22%	22%	7%	19%	0%	21%
C	22%	20%	21%	39%	50%	44%	59%	20%	31%
D	10%	8%	14%	9%	22%	37%	13%	20%	21%

Table 15: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 13: Do you think employees should be required to provide notice they intend to take bereavement leave to their employer?”

- I. If the leave is taken very soon after the bereavement (within the first few days or weeks)”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
Yes	30%	28%	36%	60%	28%	57%	32%	40%	57%
No	70%	72%	64%	40%	72%	43%	68%	60%	43%

Table 16: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 13: Do you think employees should be required to provide notice they intend to take bereavement leave to their employer?”

II. If the leave is taken at a later period (e.g. several weeks or months after the bereavement)“

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
Yes	75%	73%	91%	88%	78%	89%	87%	60%	100%
No	25%	27%	9%	12%	22%	11%	13%	40%	0%

Table 17: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 13a: (For those that answered ‘yes’ to I): How much notice should employees be required to give to their employer that they intend to take bereavement leave straight away?”

**A) Before the employee starts work on the day they intend to take leave, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter
B) Other”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	94%	95%	91%	87%	100%	75%	91%	100%	92%
B	7%	6%	9%	20%	0%	25%	9%	0%	8%

Table 18: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 13b: (For those that answered ‘yes’ to II): What is a reasonable notice period employees should give for leave taken at a later period?”

- A) Before the employee starts work on the day they intend to take leave, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter**
- B) One week’s notice before the leave is due to start**
- C) Two weeks’ notice before the leave is due to start**
- D) Other”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	49%	53%	30%	24%	50%	32%	46%	33%	13%
B	37%	36%	38%	48%	36%	37%	42%	67%	74%
C	14%	14%	25%	19%	7%	5%	8%	0%	9%
D	8%	8%	10%	10%	14%	26%	13%	0%	13%

Table 19: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 14: If you think that notice should be given for bereavement leave, in what form should it be given?”

- A) The same as Parental Bereavement Leave (any form of notice is acceptable)**
- B) Any form of written communication (e.g., text, WhatsApp, Teams, Slack, but not a phone call)**
- C) Formal written notice should be sent via e-mail**
- D) Other (please state)”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	76%	77%	66%	73%	82%	88%	69%	60%	75%
B	32%	34%	20%	18%	18%	12%	17%	40%	14%
C	13%	12%	19%	9%	0%	4%	17%	0%	11%
D	4%	3%	8%	14%	6%	4%	14%	0%	7%

Table 20: Responses by stakeholder type to “Question 15: For bereavement leave do you think that employees should be required to provide evidence of a bereavement to their employer?”

- A) Yes, for the death of a loved one**
- B) Yes, for pregnancy loss**
- C) Evidence should not be required but an employer should have the right to request evidence if they feel it is necessary**
- D) No, but they should be required to sign a declaration that they are eligible to take bereavement leave, and the reason they are taking leave is due to a bereavement or pregnancy loss**
- E) No**
- F) Not sure**
- G) Another option not listed here”**

	All	Individuals	Employers	BROs	Academic and research orgs	Trade Unions	A Charity or Interest Group	Legal representatives	Other
A	6%	6%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	10%
B	6%	6%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	19%
C	49%	50%	55%	71%	44%	25%	30%	20%	45%
D	38%	39%	34%	25%	33%	18%	40%	60%	32%
E	17%	17%	11%	13%	28%	54%	30%	0%	10%
F	4%	4%	1%	4%	0%	0%	3%	0%	10%
G	2%	2%	4%	13%	6%	11%	0%	0%	10%

Annex B: Responses to demographic questions

Table A: Business/employer respondents by sector to “Question 4: If responding as an employer, business, business owner or business representative, what sector are you based in?”

Business type	Count
Accommodation & food service activities	9
Administrative & support service activities	≤5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	≤5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	6
Construction	7
Education	42
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	≤5
Financial & insurance activities	10
Health Sector	≤5
Human Health and social work activities	53
Information and communication	≤5
Law	≤5

Business type	Count
Other service activities	56
Public administration & defence; compulsory social security	17
Real estate activities	≤5
Retail	≤5
Services Sector	16
Transportation and storage	≤5
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	≤5
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	7
Total	245

There were additional questions for individuals, to help government better understand the experiences of different groups of parents.

Table B: Individual respondents by sex to “Question 5: What is your sex?”

Sex	Count
Female	1,692
Male	121
Prefer not to say	30
N/A	≤5
Total	1,847

Table C: Individual respondents, by same gender and sex at birth to “Question 6: Is your gender the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?”

Gender same as sex?	Count
Yes	1,806
No	≤5
Prefer not to say	32
N/A	≤5
Total	1,847

Table D: Individual respondents by ethnic group to “Question 7: What is your ethnic group?”

Ethnic group	Count
Arab	≤5
Asian/Asian British	26
Bangladeshi	≤5

Ethnic group	Count
Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British	27
Chinese	≤5
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	611
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	≤5
Indian	10
Irish	27
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	25
Pakistani	≤5
White	1,020
White and Asian	14
White and Black African	≤5
White and Black Caribbean	10
Any other Asian background, please describe	6
Any other ethnic group, please describe	23
Any other White background, please describe	20
N/A	≤5
Total	1,840

Table E: Individual respondents by religion to “Question 8: What is your religion?”

Religion	Count
Buddhist	≤5
Christian	613
Hindu	9
Jewish	10
Muslim	18
Sikh	≤5
No religion	1,102
Prefer not to say	56
Don't Know	≤5
N/A	≤5
Any other religion	10
Total	1,837

Table F: Individual respondents by age group to “Question 9: Which of the following age brackets do you fit into?”

Age	Count
18 to 24	34
25 to 34	726
35 to 44	758

Age	Count
45 to 54	197
55 to 64	78
65 to 74	16
75+	≤5
N/A	≤5
Prefer not to say	31
Total	1,846

Table G: Individual respondents by relationship status to “Question 10: What is your relationship status?”

Relationship status	Count
Divorced	20
In a long-term relationship, not married or in a civil partnership	468
In a registered civil partnership	13
Married	1,186
Separated, but still legally married	16
Single / unmarried	109
Widowed	8
N/A	≤5

Relationship status	Count
Total responses that indicated their relationship status	1,824

Table H: Individual respondents by dependent/caring responsibility to “Question 11: Do you have any dependants/Are you a carer?”

Carer/dependents	Count
Yes	969
No	821
Prefer not to say	46
N/A	≤5
Total	1,840

Annex C: Use of Consult artificial intelligence tool

To enhance the quality and efficiency of the analytical process, we partnered with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to employ their artificial intelligence-powered tool, Consult.

Consult uses AI and data science techniques to automatically extract patterns and themes from the responses and turns them into dashboards for policy makers. This means humans can spend less time identifying themes and mapping responses to those themes, and more time turning them into actionable insights that shape government policy.

The tool supported qualitative analysis in three main stages. First, it generated the list of themes raised across the responses to each question. Next, it identified which (if any) themes were present in each individual response. Finally, Consult produces a dashboard of responses available to policy officials, which summarises the thematic findings and allows them to easily search through and filter responses by theme and respondent demography.

A number of quality assurance measures were put in place to ensure Consult met our performance standards. First, policy officials refined the list of themes Consult generated for each question. Starting with a long list generated by Consult, the policy teams were able to add, modify, split, or combine themes, to produce a short list. The purpose of this check was to ensure that the themes were relevant to the policy questions, and at times to identify less common themes from the AI-generated long list that officials felt were particularly important.

For each question, a final list was agreed to be used in the assessment of findings. BIST (former DBT and former DSIT) also undertook human-led evaluations to ensure that Consult was able to accurately identify which themes were present in a consultation response. Consult was measured against the F1 standard, a widely recognised AI quality metric. It identified how often the AI recognises the same themes in consultation responses as human reviewers. An F1 score of 1 means the AI and human reviewers always agree. AI is considered good quality if human reviewers agree with the AI at least as often as they agree with other humans. In our evaluation, human reviewers agreed with Consult more frequently (F1 scores of 0.663 and 0.704) than they agreed with each other (F1 score of 0.652).

You can read more about Consult and the team behind it on the [AI.GOV.UK website](https://ai.gov.uk).

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