

Parental bereavement leave confirmed

From 6th April 2020, a brand new right to time off will be introduced which enables bereaved parents to take time off work to grieve. Here, we take a look at the details:

- Until now, there has been no law requiring employers to grant a period of bereavement leave; time off was purely at the employer's discretion. The new law will give parents who lose a child under the age of 18 a right to take two weeks off work.
- The right applies to "bereaved parents" who will include birth parents, adoptive parents, those who are fostering to adopt and legal guardians.
- The right to parental bereavement leave will also apply when parents suffer a stillbirth at 24 weeks of pregnancy or later.
- Leave can be taken as either a single block of two weeks or as two separate blocks of one week within 56 weeks of the death, designed to give employees the opportunity to take leave at the anniversary of the death.
- Employees who have 26 weeks' service will receive pay whilst on leave at the statutory payment rate which will be £151.20 per week from 5 April 2020.

Employers urged to postpone trips to Wuhan

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has urged that all non-essential travel to Wuhan, China, be avoided. The town is currently at the centre of a virus outbreak, called Coronavirus, which has killed several people who are known to have travelled to the area.

Did you know?

Employers have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect employees against risks. Alternatives to travel to affected areas, such as conducting meetings by Skype, should be encouraged. Employers concerned that an employee who has recently returned from the area is ill may consider a period of paid suspension.

Call for employers to moderate "football banter"

Ann Francke, chief executive of the Chartered Management Institute, says sporting conversations encourage "laddish culture" and can lead to employees who do not follow the sport feeling left out at work. She feels this impacts on female employees "in particular".

Did you know?

Deliberate exclusion is a form of bullying and, if allowed to progress, could potentially lead to claims of harassment. That said, it is important to avoid being stereotypical in any workplace ban of this nature. For example, many female employees may also follow the sport and therefore would not benefit from such a ban.

Employee loses age claim over birthday comment

An employee has been unsuccessful in her claim of age discrimination after a colleague commented on her 50th birthday along the lines of how she couldn't hide her birthday from others. The employee said the remark left her "utterly shocked" and was "humiliating."

Did you know?

Finding that the employee's sensitivity about her age was "unusual and extreme", the claim was dismissed. It is open for the employment tribunal to find that there were no grounds for an employee to feel harassed by any behaviour complained of. That said, they can also find in a claimant's favour even if it was not intended to harass them.

The new right to parental bereavement leave will require employers to review their current bereavement leave policy to ensure compliance with the new right to time off. It may be that some employers already offer entitlements in excess of the new statutory minimum for parents who lose a child; to check details, please call our 24 hour advice service.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.