**MARIE CURIE BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

PURPOSE

1. It is important to be with, and support loved ones at the end of life; to have time and space to grieve and make the necessary arrangements following bereavement. Individual circumstances vary and following bereavement we each respond differently to grief and have different roles to play. That's why when supporting loved ones at the end of life or grieving following a bereavement, people should feel trusted and have the flexibility to respond.

OBJECTIVES

2. This policy describes our approach to bereavement and grief at the end of life and sets out provisions for employees who lose a loved one. It outlines circumstances in which the leave can be granted and the support available to bereaved employees. Marie Curie embraces flexible working and encourages employees and their line managers to discuss how this flexibility can also support the employee whilst continuing to ensure organisational needs are met.

SCOPE

3. This policy applies to all employees of the organisation from the first day of their employment at Marie Curie, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

DEFINITIONS

4. Bereavement leave is time off for an employee to support loved ones nearing the end of their life, to grieve the following bereavement or to deal with other matters relating to the death of loved ones and others.

5. Working week is the contractual weekly hours.

6. Day of bereavement leave:

• If you are a full-time employee, it is any working day.

• If you are a part-time employee, it is any working day you are contracted to work from your normal working pattern.

• If you are a variable hours worker, it is any day in the week, and the entitlement will be pro-rata based on the average hours worked over the last 12 months before the leave request made.

CONTRACTUAL STATUS

7. The policy does not include any terms and conditions of employment and is not contractual, and Marie Curie reserves the right to review and amend the policy as necessary.

RELATED POLICIES

Flexible Working Policy

8. Below we outline additional circumstances in which MC would consider the provision of Special Leave to be appropriate, and an indication as to whether this should be paid or unpaid. Line Managers should consider whether they are able to provide flexibility using our Flexible Working Policy, and should use their discretion. HR should be consulted on matters where there is doubt or ambiguity.

Data Protection Policy

9. Marie Curie will treat personal data collected during the policy and procedure in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Information about how an employee's data is used and the basis for its processing can be found in our Employee Privacy Notice. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with our Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees will:

· Speak to their line manager and seek authorisation for bereavement leave as soon as possible.

Line managers will:

· Deal with requests for special leave promptly and with empathy and compassion.

· Employees will be advised whether the time off will be paid or unpaid.

· Agree with the employee how to communicate their absence to the rest of the team.

· Ensure that adequate cover is arranged, where appropriate.

· Keep a record of all bereavement requests from members of their team.

· Remind employees taking Bereavement Leave that they can access support from our Employee Assistance Programme.

HR will:

· Update and monitor the policy to ensure consistency throughout the organisation.

· Provide support and guidance to employees and managers where required.

TYPES OF BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Bereavement for a loved one

10. Staff can ask for time off with pay to support and grieve for a loved one which can be a close or extended family member or friend.

11. Staff can apply for up to two working weeks' time off with pay for bereavement leave and can be extended to up to four working weeks' paid time off taking into account special circumstances, such as the distance to travel, religious rituals, responsibility for the funeral arrangements, responsibility for taking care of the estate of the lost one, and any matters that must be addressed when a loved one dies.

12. If more time is needed, then an application for a further two working weeks unpaid time off will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

13. We recognise that the impact of bereavement and the grief of loss can have an impact at different times for different people in different circumstances. Time away can be taken flexibly either in a single day, in one block or in a combination, and is available for the period of up to 56 weeks after the death of a loved one.

14. This time can be used as follows:

• Supporting a loved one at the end of life; make care arrangements; spend some time with them to say goodbye and be with them at the time of death.

• Grieving following the death of a loved one; mourning, arranging and attending the funeral or memorial service, resolving matters of inheritance, the fulfilment of family obligations, or managing estates.

Parental bereavement leave

15. Parental Bereavement Leave is a special type of leave to deal with the death of a child under the age of 18 or stillborn after 24 weeks' pregnancy.

16. The Parental Bereavement Leave can be taken by:

• birth parent (regardless of gender)

• adoptive parent (regardless of gender) if the child was living with them

• a person who lived with the child and had responsibility for them, for at least four weeks before they died

• 'intended parent' – due to become the legal parent through surrogacy (regardless of gender)

• partner of the child's parent, if they live with the child and the child's parent (regardless of gender) in an enduring family relationship

17. Eligible employees are normally entitled to take two working weeks paid leave, but this can be extended to up to four working weeks' paid time off taking into account special circumstances. If more time is needed, then an application for a further two working weeks unpaid time off will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

18. If more than one child dies, the employee is normally entitled to two working weeks of Parental Bereavement Leave for each child.

19. We recognise that the impact of bereavement and the grief of loss can have an impact at different times for different people in different circumstances. Time away can be taken flexibly either in a single day, in one block or in a combination, and is available for the period of up to 56 weeks after the death of a child.

Paying respect

20. Time-off can also be given even where attendance is more about 'paying respect' or supporting others to attend funerals and memorials of loved ones, rather than because of the grief associated with death.

21. Normally, one day of paid leave would be agreed in these circumstances where absence is required for a full day. In the event that no leave allowance remains, unpaid leave may be used. Line Managers can authorise an additional day in special circumstances, such as the distance to travel, religious rituals, or the individual's role in supporting others.

Pet or animal bereavement

22. For many of us, our pets or service animals (e.g. hearing dogs, guide dogs) are often seen as part of the family, so, when it comes to saying goodbye, it can be an extremely tough and emotional time. If you have lost, or are facing saying goodbye to, a loved pet or animal you should speak to your line manager. The animal's role would need to be considered: for example; working dog, service animal, or therapy animal.

23. Marie Curie will offer bereavement leave for your pets and animals. Normally it will be one day of paid or unpaid leave; however, each case will be reviewed individually.

Death of supporter, volunteer, patient and co-worker

24. Many employees are likely to have an ongoing professional relationship with co-workers, supporters, volunteers and families of our patients. Our presence at a funeral or memorial service is always noted. Marie Curie would normally enable you to take paid-time-off during working hours to attend a funeral or memorial service and allow you to pay your respects, before returning to work. Paid leave is an option if required.

25. It should always be decided on a case by case basis, and all requests need to be discussed with the line managers who will decide. Their decision will be based on the current workload, the time needed for travel and personal circumstances. None of our staff should feel pressure to attend the funeral or memorial and the decision to attend or not to

attend the funeral/memorial/service should be made by the individual, considering their wellbeing and work-life balance.

MANAGING BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Approving bereavement leave

26. Line managers have the discretion to approve paid and unpaid bereavement leave. Line managers will work with employees on a case-by-case basis to determine what the employee's needs are and what Marie Curie is able to offer.

Communication to the team

27. It is a bereaved employee's right to decide how much information they want co-workers to know, and if they wish to be contacted by colleagues. This should be discussed with the line manager.

Annual Leave during bereavement leave

28. An employee who suffers a bereavement while on annual leave, can convert their annual leave into bereavement leave, and take their annual leave at a future date.

Return to work after bereavement leave

29. Employees returning to work from bereavement leave can come back full time or for a phased return. Sometimes a full return to work may not be possible immediately after the death of a close person, for example, when the grief is likely to impact their ability to perform their role, or where new child care arrangements have to be sourced, or

responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee. Marie Curie is open to flexible working and in such instances will allow a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours basis. Alternative duties may also be considered. Any change will need to be discussed and approved by the line manager and will be managed in line with the flexible working policy.

Adjustment to work

30. An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with either their line manager or the Human Resources Department, to ensure that any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place and that the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager.

31. Marie Curie is aware that grief can cause depression, which may be considered a disability. Marie Curie will ensure that employees with a disability are not subject to discrimination. Consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements to a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and assist a return to work. Marie Curie may ask employees to speak to the occupational health service for advice on how best to manage any impacts on work.

OTHER SUPPORT FOR BEREAVEMENT

**Counselling services**

Via our Employee Assistance Programme, Marie Curie provides staff with a free and completely confidential counselling service which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Staff can call the service for any issue which may be impacting on their work or personal lives, including bereavement. Face to face counselling can also be arranged. ~~Our Employee~~

**Financial support**

There are many ways staff can get help with funeral costs. If employees don't qualify for the Government's 'Funeral Payments' scheme or for the Bereavement Payment, then they can ask Marie Curie for a loan to help with the funeral cost. The cost will be deducted from salary over an agreed period up to a maximum of 12 months. ~~The amount of the funeral loan will not exceed monthly net salary unless special permission is obtained from the Director of Corporate Services. If an employee leaves employment, the outstanding amount will be repayable to Marie Curie and will be deducted from the final month's salary.~~

**Marie Curie Information and Support**

Our colleagues are also encouraged to access Marie Curie’s services which offers help with practical information and support on all aspects of life with terminal illness, dying and bereavement.