

Pregnancy Loss Policy

April 2021



Introduction

Channel 4 is committed to supporting all employees who suffer the loss of a pregnancy, whether it happens directly to them, their partner or their baby's surrogate mother, regardless of the nature of their loss, and whatever their length of service.

This policy recognises that pregnancy loss can be a bereavement, and one not isolated to women or heterosexual couples.

This policy also makes no assumptions about how employees suffering a loss feel, or how they want to be treated. It instead aims to outline the support that is available, and advice that may be useful, should an employee need it.

WHO is this policy for?

This policy is for:

- Employees who suffer a pregnancy loss, whether it happens directly to them, their partner or their baby's surrogate mother;
- Line managers of employees who are experiencing or have experienced such losses;
- Colleagues who wish to support fellow employees through pregnancy loss.

WHY is this policy important?

Pregnancy loss is sadly more common than many people think. An estimated one in four pregnancies ends in miscarriage (source: The Miscarriage Association); one in every 200 births in the UK each year is classed as stillborn; and it is estimated that one in three women will have an abortion in their lifetime.

The experience of pregnancy loss is poorly understood due to the silence surrounding it. It varies from person to person, but it can be an incredibly painful event that has a lasting physical and emotional impact on those experiencing it and their families, no matter the nature of the loss or when it happens.

We recommend reading more about the nature of different types of pregnancy loss, you can find links against the definitions in the Introduction above, and also in the 'Where' section below. When reading, please bear in mind that every individual's experience is unique.

'Pregnancy loss' includes but is not limited to:

Miscarriage: the spontaneous loss of pregnancy until 24 weeks of gestation. [Learn more about miscarriage >](#)

Stillbirth: the loss of a baby after 24 weeks, before or during birth. [Learn more about stillbirth >](#)

Abortion: a medical or surgical procedure to end a pregnancy. [Learn more about abortion >](#)

Ectopic pregnancy: when a fertilised egg implants and grows outside of the uterus. [Learn more about ectopic pregnancy >](#)

Molar pregnancy: a rare form of pregnancy in which a non-viable fertilised egg implants in the uterus and will fail to reach full term. [Learn more about molar pregnancy >](#)

Neonatal loss: the loss of a baby within the first 28 days after they are born, often caused by premature births or genetic disorders. [Learn more about neonatal loss >](#)

Please note: it can be hard to find the right language to use when describing pregnancy loss. Channel 4 has chosen to use the most widely-used and accepted terms within this policy but welcomes feedback.

WHAT are the details of the policy?

Channel 4 is committed to supporting anyone experiencing pregnancy loss with the below, regardless of their length of service, and whether they are in the office or working remotely. Everyone's experience is different, and an employee is entitled to discuss bespoke arrangements with their line manager and People Partner if needed, based on their individual circumstances.

All types of pregnancy loss:

Two weeks' paid leave

All employees who have been affected by a pregnancy loss (including partners and those with a surrogate mother) are entitled to a minimum of two weeks' leave on full pay. Employees can self-certify, without the need for a fit note, using the Absence booking system on Moss. If you require a further period of absence, details of our Sickness Absence Policy can be found on Moss. Emotional and physical recovery from a pregnancy loss does not have a time limit and employees may find they need to take further sickness leave after having returned to work, which they are entitled to. Employees should not feel judged or discriminated against when requesting time off to recover from loss.

Paid leave for medical appointments

Employees are entitled to paid time off to attend appointments (or to accompany their partners) relating to pregnancy loss which do not fall within an agreed period of leave, including but not limited to medical examinations, scans and tests, and mental health-related appointments. Line managers should recognise that it will not always be possible for employees to arrange these around the demands of their work due to the nature of pregnancy loss, and should support employees in managing the impact of time away from work.

Flexible working

When an employee is not on leave, Channel 4 recognises that flexibility is key to anyone suffering a pregnancy loss, and aims to facilitate flexible working

wherever possible. Channel 4 has an established Flexible Working Policy that can be found on Moss that allows employees to make a permanent change to their contract. However, should an employee require a more temporary/flexible change, working arrangements could include:

- A phased return to work
- More breaks and time away from their computer
- Flexibility to work in other areas of the building when in the office
- Earlier start times and finish times to avoid peak travel times when travelling into the office
- A request to reduce working hours on a temporary basis
- Turning their camera off when on video calls

These should be discussed and agreed with the employee's line manager and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these adjustments continue to meet the needs of the employee.

General support

Channel 4 aims to facilitate an open, understanding working environment. We encourage employees to inform their line manager that they are experiencing pregnancy loss at an early stage to ensure that the necessary support can be arranged. Employees who do not initially feel comfortable discussing the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have a confidential conversation with:

- Their People Partner
- Channel 4's Pregnancy Loss Champion, [REDACTED], who sits within the People Team
- 4Women ([REDACTED])
- A trusted colleague
- A Mental Health First Aider
- 4Mind, our mental health employee resource group ([REDACTED])
- 4Parents&Carers, our parents and carers resource group ([REDACTED])

Medical support

We encourage employees to speak to their GP when they are experiencing pregnancy loss. The virtual health service app, Babylon, offers access to a GP 24 hours a day, seven days a week to those employees who are signed up to the Bupa private medical insurance benefit. Details of how to access Babylon can be found on Moss. Bupa also pays for eligible treatment of the following conditions.

- Miscarriage or when the foetus has died and remains with the placenta in the womb
- Stillbirth
- Afterbirth left in the womb following birth
- Molar pregnancy
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Complications following any of the above conditions

Members can also utilise the Bupa helpline to access mental health support.

If an employee suffering pregnancy loss needs support that is not covered by Bupa, or if they are not a Bupa member and need help understanding their options, they can discuss this in confidence with the Channel 4 Pregnancy Loss Champion, [REDACTED].

Medical support whilst in the office:

For employees experiencing symptoms of pregnancy loss whilst in the office, they can contact Channel 4 First Aiders who are being trained to respond to pregnancy-related incidents.

London – contact Security (you can request a female first aider if preferred) on:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

N&R offices – employees can also contact their local Workspace Coordinator*:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

*Or call Security in London who can also put you in touch with your local first aider.

Counselling

Employees suffering pregnancy loss may find it most useful to speak to someone who is specially trained in their specific type of loss. Channel 4 therefore recommends speaking to one of the specialist organisations recommended under the 'Where' section below. As mentioned above, Bupa members can also utilise the Bupa helpline for any mental health support. Channel 4 also provides access to a confidential counselling service via the Employee Assistance Programme, which can be found on Moss. The service offers support, expert advice and counselling. It is free and easy to access and is available online or on the telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Returning to work

Returning to work after pregnancy loss can be incredibly challenging. Employees are encouraged to have an ongoing discussion with their line manager about necessary adjustments (see 'Flexible Working' above). A buddying arrangement between an employee and someone who will have been specially trained in pregnancy loss, is also available. Employees are welcome to approach their People Partner directly about this, or can contact 4Women or Channel 4's Pregnancy Loss Champion [REDACTED] for a confidential discussion in the first instance if preferred. The buddying arrangement can be tailored to the employee, and can consist of weekly or daily check-ins, depending on the employee's wishes.

Pregnancy loss after 24 weeks (stillbirth) and neonatal loss:

Statutory maternity pay and maternity leave

Female employees carrying the pregnancy are entitled to maternity leave and maternity pay and should refer to the Maternity section within our Family Friendly policies on Moss.

Please also note that all employees are entitled to two weeks' Parental Bereavement Leave on full pay if their child dies under the age of 18. Please refer to the Compassionate Leave section of the Family Friendly Policy which can be found on Moss. You can find more [guidance on bereavement here](#). If you require a further period of absence, details of our Sickness Absence Policy can be found on Moss.

HOW do you now go about things?

The following identifies our responsibilities as employees, colleagues, line managers and Channel 4.

Employees are encouraged to:

- Educate themselves about pregnancy loss and become familiar with the terms of this policy. Understand what information is available, and seek advice and guidance when needed.
- Be as open and honest as possible with line managers – reviewing and working through the available options together to ensure appropriate measures that support your needs are in place, which also allows their line manager to make any necessary arrangements.
- Agree to keep their line manager and Channel 4 informed to ensure that the right support is being provided.
- If unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supportive, speak to one of the people mentioned in 'General support' (above).

Colleagues are encouraged to:

- Support colleagues who suffer pregnancy loss, contacting their People Partner or any of the individuals listed under 'General support' for advice

if needed. This [guide may help you understand more about the support you can offer](#).

Line Managers are encouraged to:

- Take part in future mandatory pregnancy loss awareness training.
- Review available resources on Moss to support employees through pregnancy loss, when one of their direct reports is in need of support.
- Ensure they are aware of the support Channel 4 provides and the terms of this policy.
- Ensure all members of their team are aware of this policy and know where to find information and seek support.
- Treat all parents and partners equally.
- Ensure they listen to the needs of each employee individually and are open and willing to have discussions about pregnancy loss, ensuring confidentiality where requested by the employee. This guide from The Miscarriage Association provides useful advice on [how to discuss pregnancy loss with an employee](#). Tommy's has created a similar guide on [supporting an employee after stillbirth](#).
- Work together with the employee to ensure that the right support is provided that satisfies the employee and Channel 4's needs.
- Agree a suitable time and date to check-in with an employee before they return to work after pregnancy loss, and put in regular follow up check-ins to review any support and make any necessary adjustments that an employee may need. These regular check-ins are particularly important when working remotely, as it can be harder to spot when an employee is suffering.

Channel 4 will:

- Ensure it reviews its health and wellbeing policies and practices on a regular basis.
- Ensure its health offerings (EAP, Private Medical Insurance, Babylon) have provisions to support employees experiencing pregnancy loss.
- Listen to and work with employees and 4Women to support and drive change in relation to pregnancy loss.

WHERE can you get related information?

The Miscarriage Association

miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Founded in 1982 by a group of people who had experienced miscarriage, the Miscarriage Association continues to offer support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy, and works to raise awareness and promote good practice in medical care.

Whilst they do not provide counselling services themselves, they provide more information on [counselling services that are available](#).

SANDS

sands.org.uk

SANDS is an organisation that can offer you support if your baby dies during pregnancy or after birth.

They also run a helpline 10am - 3pm Monday to Friday and 6pm - 9pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings: 0808 164 3332.

Tommy's

tommys.org

Tommy's is a charity that funds research into pregnancy problems but also provides information for parents-to-be.

Petals

petalscharity.org

Petals is an organisation providing specialist counselling services after a pregnancy loss.

Arc

arc-uk.org/about-arc

Arc is a national charity offering parents support during antenatal screening and following a termination.

AbortionTalk

abortiontalk.com

AbortionTalk is a new charity offering the opportunity to talk about abortion in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.

We are always looking to build our list of useful resources for staff. Please do let us know if you find an organisation or website not already included helpful.

This policy was introduced by Channel 4's gender equality staff network, 4Women, in April 2021 to ensure Channel 4 provides the best support for anyone experiencing pregnancy loss. Please get in touch with 4Women if you have any feedback or feel there are other ways Channel 4 could provide support.

Please note: This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and Channel 4 may amend it at any time.

