Pregnancy Loss Policy

Why and who

Channel 4 is committed to supporting anyone experiencing pregnancy loss, no matter how long you've worked with us. This policy explains the types of pregnancy loss that are covered, gives information about what leave you can take and outlines the support that is available, both internally and externally to Channel 4.

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees. It is not part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Pregnancy Loss Policy

The important bits

We know pregnancy loss can be devastating, whether it happens to you, your partner or the surrogate having your baby. If you're reading this because you've been affected, we're sorry for your loss. We want you to know that we understand that pregnancy loss, whenever or however it happens, is a bereavement and that getting the right support at work is crucial. We're committed to providing the best support for you if you're going through this. This policy highlights the different ways we can support you, so you can decide what works best for you.

Use of language and definitions

It can be difficult to find the right language to describe pregnancy loss. Channel 4 has used the most widely accepted terms in this policy. We'll review it in line with our policy review process to make sure that it stays current and up to date.

In this policy, pregnancy loss is defined as, but is not limited to, the following:

Term	**Definition**
Miscarriage	spontaneous loss of a pregnancy in the first 24 weeks
Stillbirth	loss of a baby from 24 weeks, during labour or birth
Ectopic pregnancy	when a fertilised egg develops outside the womb
Molar pregnancy	when an abnormal fertilised egg implants in the uterus
Neonatal loss	loss of a live-born baby up to 28 days after the birth
Embryo transfer loss	when an embryo transfer during fertility treatment doesn't result in pregnancy
Abortion or termination of pregnancy	a medical or surgical procedure to end a pregnancy

Pregnancy loss after 24 weeks (stillbirth) and neonatal loss

You're entitled to maternity leave and maternity pay if you suffer a loss after the 24th week of pregnancy. For more details about this leave, please read the Family Policies: Guidance Document.

Medical appointments and support

You can take paid time off for yourself or to go with your partner to any appointments related to your pregnancy loss. This is different and is in addition to any leave that has been agreed. Examples of appointments include medical examinations, scans and tests, and mental health-related appointments. We know it's not always possible for you to arrange these around the demands of your work and your manager will manage the impact of your time away from work.

We encourage you to speak to your GP. You can also access a GP, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through your private health insurance. How to access the virtual GP is explained on Your4. You can also use your private health insurance to get mental health support if needed.

The really important bits

Time away from work

All colleagues who have been affected by pregnancy loss, including partners and those affected by loss during fertility treatment or surrogacy, can take leave on full pay through the Exceptional Leave Policy.

Employees are encouraged to take the time away from work to heal, look after themselves and spend time with their family (biological or chosen) during this time. We usually give up to 10 days of paid leave, but some situations may need more or less time.

There's no limit on the number of times you can take the leave if you're affected by more than one loss. It also doesn't matter how long you've worked with us or how many hours you work.

Return to work

Returning to work after a pregnancy loss can be incredibly challenging. Keep speaking to your manager about any adjustments that would help you. This policy also includes a list of other people you can speak to for support.

We know that flexibility is key for anyone suffering a pregnancy loss. If you ask to work flexibly, we'll try to support this wherever possible. The Flexible Working Policy allows employees to change their working hours or structure, permanently or temporarily. We can also look at making changes on a shorter and more ad-hoc basis. This could include:

- a phased return to work
- more breaks during the working day
- more time away from your computer
- flexibility to work in other areas of the building when in the office or another office location on a short-term basis
- earlier start and finish times to avoid peak travel times when going to the office

- a temporary reduction in your working hours
- keeping your camera off during video calls
- any other reasonable adjustments that would support you in the short-term

These should be discussed and agreed with your manager and reviewed on a regular basis to make sure they continue to meet your needs. If you feel you need something permanent, please speak to your manager about submitting a formal flexible working request.

Support and related policies

Internal information and support

Channel 4 aims to create an open, understanding working environment and so we encourage you to speak to your manager about your pregnancy loss at an early stage so they can make sure you get the support you need. If you don't feel comfortable speaking to your manager you may find it helpful to have a confidential conversation with:

- your People Partner
- People Enquiries
- 4Womxn
- a trusted colleague
- a Mental Health First Aider
- 4Mind co-chairs
- 4Parents&Carers co-chairs

These policies may also be helpful:

- Exceptional Leave Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

External information and support

The following links are to external sites that you may find useful.

The Miscarriage Association provides information about counselling services that are available.

Sands is an organisation that offers support if your baby dies during pregnancy or after birth.

Tommy's is a charity that funds research into pregnancy problems but also provides information about baby loss support.

Petals provides specialist counselling services after a pregnancy loss.

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

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

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust (EPT) focuses on ectopic pregnancy and supports anyone experiencing the condition. The website is medically overseen and includes information on the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of ectopic pregnancy as well as physical and emotional recovery.

GOV.UK provides information about the Children's Funeral Fund, which can help to pay for some of the costs of a funeral for a child under 18 or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Do I have to tell my manager?

We know that it's a difficult time and that you might not want to tell anyone what has happened. But if you can be open and honest with your manager, they can discuss your options with you so the measures that are put in place are supportive and manageable.

If you can't speak to your manager or would prefer to speak with someone else first, contact one of the people listed in the Internal Information and Support section of this policy.

What if I experience symptoms of pregnancy loss when I'm in the office?

How to get a first aider can be found on first aid page.

What should I do if I feel like I need more time off after taking some exceptional leave?

If you feel like you need more time off after a period of exceptional leave, you can follow the Sickness Absence Policy and process.

Policy owner	People Team
Approved by	[redacted]
Date of next review	Within 3 years