

Fife Sands  
PO Box 29210  
Dunfermline  
Fife  
KY12 2BS

0845 528 0322

[www.fifesands.co.uk](http://www.fifesands.co.uk)

[fife-sands@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:fife-sands@tiscali.co.uk)



Registered Charity No 299697  
Registered Charity Address 28 Portland Place, London,  
W1N 4DE



## Returning to Work Information for Employers



## **Returning to Work - Information for Employers**

If you are an employer or manager, thank you for reading this. Sands is committed to improving the care of parents, their families and friends following a still-birth or neo-natal death. Without the help of decent, caring employers, we can only go so far. With your help, we can go further. You've taken the first step.

The loss of their baby will take your employee, your colleague, your friend into a deep and dark place. A bereaved parent carries an enormous weight of grief. Neither you nor anyone else can take that burden away. But you can help lighten the load. By doing so, you can help the bereaved parent on the road to recovery.

### **The nature of grief.**

It's a personal and individual experience; we all cope in different ways; We all take a different length of time to come to terms with our losses. Grief makes many lack confidence; many feel vulnerable, fragile and hyper-sensitive. Grief can also affect people physically. It can be exhausting and debilitating.

### **In the workplace.**

You should try to take the lead at all times from the bereaved parent, by being as open as they are comfortable with. This information can only make generalisations that apply in many cases, but they will not apply in all. Issues that may arise include:

**Photographs** - Many people don't realise that bereaved parents may well have photographs of their babies, even those that are still-born. Ask to see the picture: there is no more powerful way to show you recognise their loss.

**Other pregnancies** - In a workplace of any size at all, there is a good chance one or more of the bereaved parent's colleagues is expecting or has recently had a baby. The bereaved parent may find this hard

**Difficult dates** - There are certain dates and milestones that the bereaved parent may well find especially difficult and could act as a trigger to emotions.

**A further pregnancy** - For many bereaved parents a new pregnancy could stir up whole load of conflicting and confusing emotions.

### **Practical steps to consider.**

Educate yourself about the nature of grief. Suggest a meeting with the bereaved parent face-to-face prior to their return. Suggest to the bereaved parent to write to their colleagues about what has happened prior to their return to work. Try to strike the balance in their workload as well as you can. Grief often needs silent 'alone moments' each day. Let the bereaved parent have that time.

Clearly, large organisations will be more able to absorb the extra workload generated by a bereaved parent functioning below capacity for a time. It's likely to be harder for small businesses. Do what you can to put systems in place to cover. The bereaved parent may lack confidence on their return. Reassurance can help. The cost of having a less than fully productive employee is likely, in the long run, to be far lower than recruiting and training a new one. Also, sick leave is expensive. The more you can cushion the bereaved parent, the less sick leave they're likely to need.