



[www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk](http://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk)

"We want to make Scotland a place where everyone knows how to help when someone is caring, dying or grieving."

Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief  
Est 2011

An alliance of individuals and organisations working to make Scotland a place where people help each other through the difficult times that can come with death, dying, loss and care.

Hosted by:





Paid  
bereavement  
leave?

I was required to have a call with my manager. .. I was probed for the story of my Father's death. It felt intrusive and I felt as though I was reliving the trauma. The call was also a guise to obtain work information though, something my brain was struggling to deal with at that time.

**Nothing can prepare you for how overwhelming it is to walk into a sea of familiar faces who are simply unsure of what to say/what to do.**

All in all, I can say that in some respects my employer tried their best, but this was usually down to individuals trying to overcome company policies and procedures which weren't suited to these particular circumstances.

*It was clear a few colleagues didn't know how to approach me or engage with me and I felt 'shunned'. I could sense their embarrassment and discomfort.*

What was really unhelpful were the comments like, 'Gosh 82! She had a good innings' or 'time heals everything, you'll get over it' [err – no, I won't ever 'get over' my Mum dying], 'just keep yourself busy so you don't dwell on it', or 'I wonder why your Mum didn't survive this cancer as she's survived cancer before hasn't she?'

I really appreciated that I was able to take the time I needed without being bothered by procedures or bureaucracy. There were various times after my Mum's death when I needed some time off to deal with various practical matters, and I don't ever remember having to use my annual leave to do that.

# Workplaces can play an important role providing:

- Flexibility – enabling an individual to continue working to the best of their ability while coming to terms with their new situation.
- Information – on financial, legal and other practical issues
- Understanding and social support







Photo credit: Simon Infanger

# Why is workplace support important when someone is bereaved?

Providing a supportive workplace can also have benefits for the organization. Research suggests compassion in the workplace:

- Reduces anxiety
- Helps people feel valued
- Helps people resume a sense of normality
- Increases bonds between co-workers
- Generates higher levels of shared positive emotion
- Builds a collective capacity for healing

What is getting  
in the way?





What is getting  
in the way?

**Lack of  
time**





# What is getting in the way?

**Lack of  
time**

**Lack of  
Experience**





# What is getting in the way?

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**Lack of  
confidence**





# What is getting in the way?

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**Workplace  
structures**





# What is getting in the way?

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# What is getting in the way?

**Lack of  
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**Workplace  
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**Workplace  
cultures**

**Conventions**

[https://www.goodlivedeathgrief.org.uk/content/workplace\\_home/](https://www.goodlivedeathgrief.org.uk/content/workplace_home/)



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## scottish bereavement friendly workplaces toolkit

YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) » [RESOURCES](#) » [SCOTTISH BEREAVEMENT FRIENDLY WORKPLACES TOOLKIT](#)

### welcome to the toolkit

All workplaces can be bereavement friendly workplaces - ones where employees feel supported by colleagues, managers and institutional procedures when they experience the death of someone important to them.

That support can be vital in helping people to cope with a bereavement and in helping them to adjust to live without the loved one that has died.

This **Compassionate Workplaces Toolkit** contains resources to help both employers and employees to cope with bereavement in the workplace. More content will be added soon including a film and a workplace checklist.



#### [why is workplace support important?](#)

Learn about the positive effects a supportive workplace environment can have when someone has been bereaved.

#### [case studies](#)

People share their own experiences in the workplace after a bereavement.

#### [support for managers](#)

How can those in managerial roles help create a supportive environment for staff who have been bereaved?

#### [support for staff](#)

Advice on dealing with the workplace environment after a bereavement.

Search this site ...



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# Bereavement Friendly Workplaces Toolkit



As a **colleague**,  
what can I do or say  
to show support of  
someone who's  
bereaved?

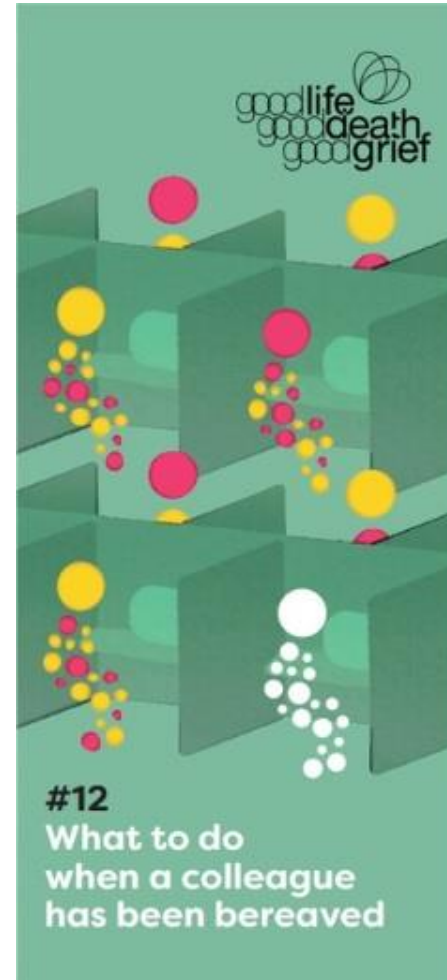
What do **managers** and  
HR staff need to know?  
What can I influence?  
What training is there?

As an **employer**,  
what policies and  
procedures create a  
helpful and  
supportive  
environment?



# What is in the toolkit?

- Designated sections for employers, for managers, for colleagues and for people who are bereaved.
- Case studies sharing the experiences of bereaved people returning to work.
- Links to training, resources, films, good practice guidance and bereavement support organisations.



- A checklist of steps to take, summarising the various ways that an employer can create a supportive environment.
- A leaflet giving tips on the kind of things that a colleague can say or do to show support when someone is bereaved.

## BEREAVEMENT-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE CHECKLIST

Policy	Procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Does your workplace have a clear, specific bereavement policy? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it easily accessed and clearly identified in the staff handbook/website? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it specify what the organisation believes is a reasonable amount of bereavement leave? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it allow for discretionary additional leave? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it offer additional support such as flexible working or staged return to work? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear who it applies to? <input type="checkbox"/> Has consideration been given to all categories of staff, including casual and contract workers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a discreet and sensitive procedure in place for how colleagues can report a bereavement? <input type="checkbox"/> Have managers been fully briefed or trained in handling a bereavement? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a procedure for informing team members when someone has been bereaved? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a procedure for managing the person's return to work, including extra support if they need it?
Communication	Office culture
<input type="checkbox"/> Do colleagues know who to speak to in the event of a bereavement? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there someone colleagues can talk to instead of a line manager if they feel the need to?	<input type="checkbox"/> Have staff been trained/briefed on how to deal with a colleague's bereavement and the importance of a supportive working environment? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there quiet space to escape to if needed? <input type="checkbox"/> Are staff able to take reasonable time away from their desks or workstations if needed? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there capacity to help a bereaved person with their workload?

More information about becoming a bereavement friendly workplace at: [https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/workplace\\_home/](https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/workplace_home/)





But will  
people use  
the toolkit?



# What is the Bereavement Charter Mark?

The Bereavement Charter Mark was developed by the Bereavement Charter Group and Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief.



Having the charter mark on your website demonstrates that you are working to make your community a place where people who are bereaved feel supported by the people around them.

# How can an employer achieve the Bereavement Charter Mark?

An employer can display the Bereavement Charter mark if they agree to meet **at least three** of the following criteria:



Inform staff about the bereavement charter mark and give them the option to watch a short film about bereavement.



Managers read relevant sections of the Scottish Bereavement Friendly Workplaces Toolkit.



Develop or adopt a Bereavement Policy for the organisation.



Visibly promote more awareness of bereavement and bereavement support.



Develop and display a local workplace bereavement charter.



**Bereavement charter mark:**

[https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/bereavement\\_charter\\_mark\\_intro/](https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/bereavement_charter_mark_intro/)

**Workplaces toolkit:**

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