



**Cognni Limited**  
**POL105 – Pregnancy Loss Policy**

## Introduction

Cognni 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. Cognni has chosen to use the most widely-used and accepted terms within this policy but welcomes feedback.

## WHAT are the details of the policy?

Cognni 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, based on their individual circumstances.

## **All types of pregnancy loss:**

### **Four 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 four weeks' leave on full pay.

Employees can self-certify. If you require a further period of absence, details of our Sickness Absence Policy is included in the Staff Handbook. 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, Cognni recognises that flexibility is key to anyone suffering a pregnancy loss, and aims to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Cognni has an established Flexible Working Policy 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
- 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.

### **Counselling**

Employees suffering pregnancy loss may find it most useful to speak to someone who is specially trained in their specific type of loss. Cognni therefore recommends speaking to one of the specialist organisations recommended under the 'Where' section below.

### **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). Employees are welcome to approach any director for a confidential discussion in the first instance if preferred.

## **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 Staff Handbook.

Please also note that all employees are entitled to four 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 Staff Handbook. 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 in the Staff Handbook.

## **HOW do you now go about things?**

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

**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 Cognni 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 directors.

**Colleagues** are encouraged to:

- Support colleagues who suffer pregnancy loss, contacting one of the directors 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 to support employees through pregnancy loss, when one of their direct reports is in need of support.
- Ensure they are aware of the support Cognni 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 Cognni'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.

**Cognni** will:

- Ensure it reviews its health and wellbeing policies and practices on a regular basis.
- Listen to and work with employees to support and drive change in relation to pregnancy loss.

**WHERE can you get related information?**

**The Miscarriage Association**

[miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://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](http://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](http://tommys.org)

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

**Petals**

[petalscharity.org](http://petalscharity.org)

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

**Arc**

[arc-uk.org/about-arc](http://arc-uk.org/about-arc)

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

**AbortionTalk**

[abortiontalk.com](http://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.

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