

CLIC Sargent briefing on the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill – 2017

Hearing your child isn't going to get better and that they are going to die is one of the hardest things any parent will ever have to deal with. Every week 10 children and young people in the UK die from cancer. CLIC Sargent supports the introduction of the Parental Bereavement (Pay and Leave) Bill and hope that it will help families that have lost a child to cancer.

Bereavement leave for families

At CLIC Sargent, we know that there are many difficulties families face when their child dies. These challenges can also include the financial impact of having to pay for the funeral. Last year we provided bereavement support to families through over 300 home visits and gave palliative care to around 250 children and young people. We support the introduction of the Parental Bereavement (Pay and Leave) Bill which will give families more time and space to deal with bereavement together. We do believe that there are **five areas where improvements can be made to the Bill** to ensure that the support families receive really meets their needs.

What improvements can be made to the Bill?

1. **The age of the child should be raised to 25 years old** – currently the Bill makes provisions for an entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave for parents who lose a child aged 18 or under. We strongly believe that the age should be extended to 25 years old or under.
2. **Parental Bereavement Leave pay should be full pay** – currently the Bill makes provisions for Parental Bereavement Leave pay to be at the statutory flat rate or 90% of average earnings (whichever is lower). We know that having a child with cancer costs parents on average an additional £600 every month whilst they are on treatment. We also know that parents often struggle to meet the costs of funerals and therefore believe that they should be entitled to leave on full pay to help with the financial impact of a cancer diagnosis.
3. **Parental Bereavement Leave should have an additional day of leave for the funeral** – we believe that in addition to the two weeks statutory leave there should be an additional day of leave for the child's funeral. This is in line with current CLIC Sargent policy for our own staff.
4. **There should be increased flexibility for the Leave** – we believe that the Bill should allow for flexibility as to when the leave can be taken up to 52 weeks after the child has died.
5. **Parental Bereavement Leave should have no minimum employment eligibility criteria** – currently the Bill makes provisions for leave for eligible parents who meet minimum requirements relating to continuity of employment (at least 26 weeks with their current employer). We believe that these eligibility criteria should be scrapped to help support those parents who may lose their child when they have just started a new role.

We urge you to consider the amendments detailed above and if you have any questions or would like more information please email Priyanka Patel, Policy & Public Affairs Officer on Priyanka.patel@clicsargent.org.uk