

Supporting Colleagues Through Pregnancy Loss:

An Introduction to Compassionate Approaches
and Statutory Bereavement Leave

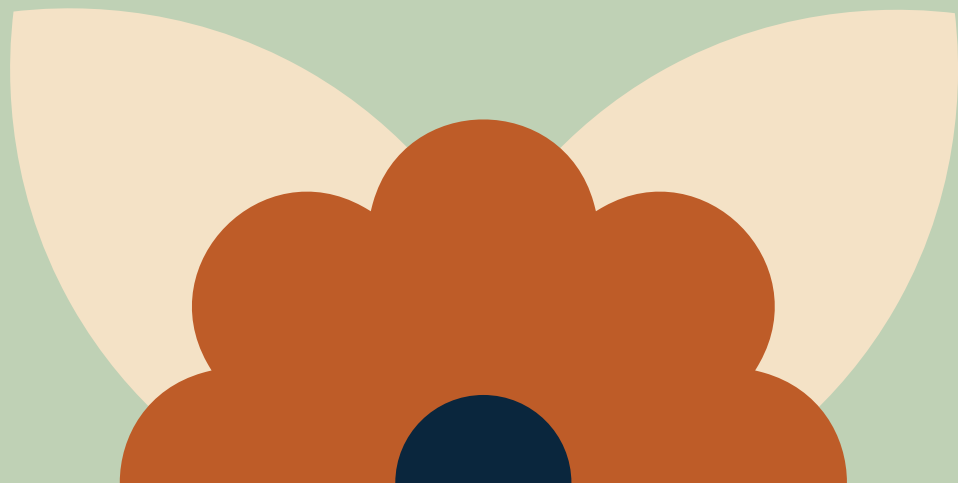
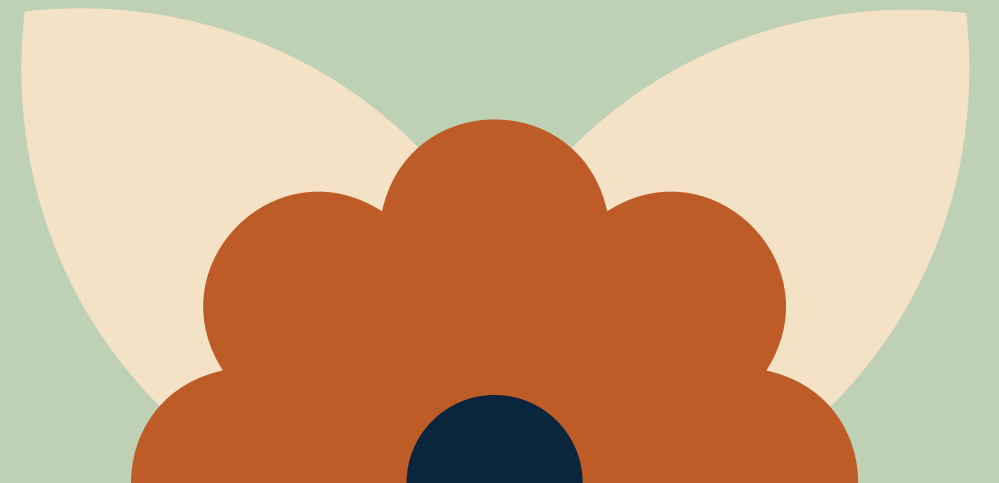


Agenda

- Gain an **understanding of pregnancy loss** - its prevalence, significance and potential impact on individuals at work.
- Be introduced to the **changing legal landscape**, incl. the **introduction of statutory bereavement leave** for pregnancy loss, and what this means for workplaces.
- Explore **examples of practical and compassionate ways to respond** when a colleague experiences pregnancy loss.
- **Q&A.**

A note:

- Sensitive topics - take breaks as needed
- Cameras
- Miscarriage UK support services



A woman with dark hair styled in braids is sitting on a couch, looking down with a contemplative expression. She is wearing a dark-colored long-sleeved top. The background is softly lit, suggesting an indoor setting.

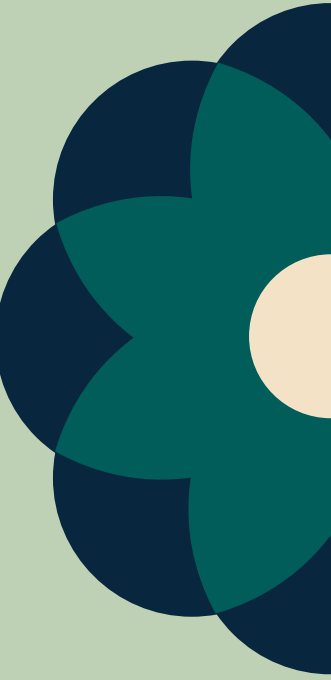
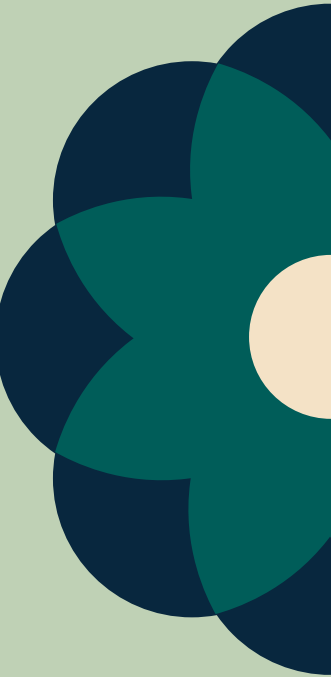
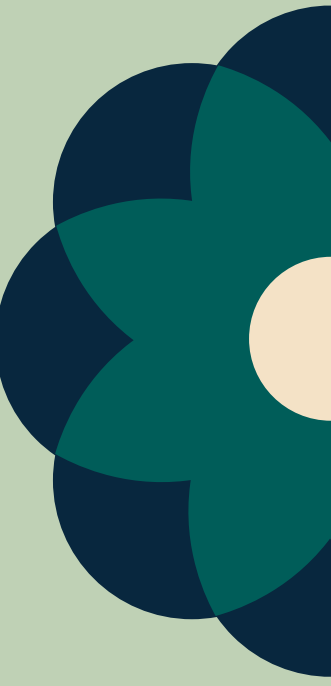
About us

- Founded in 1983 - offering specialist support for over 40 years
- The leading UK charity specifically dedicated to pre-24-week pregnancy loss
- Free support and information for anyone affected by miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy
- Promoting good care, e.g. advising on programmes like the National Bereavement Care Pathway
- Resources to support employees, employers, HR and line managers

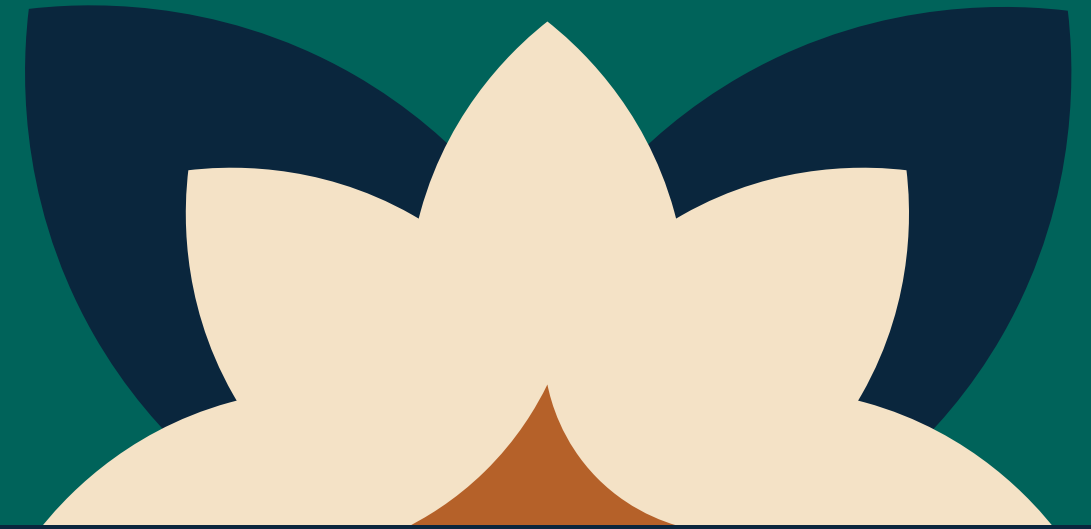


About Katy Schnitzler

- Information, Training and Research Lead at Miscarriage UK
- Academic and training consultant – specialising in reproductive health, and childlessness, at work
- PhD – reproductive experiences in the workplace
- Using academic research to inform organisations on how to better support countless employees/people affected



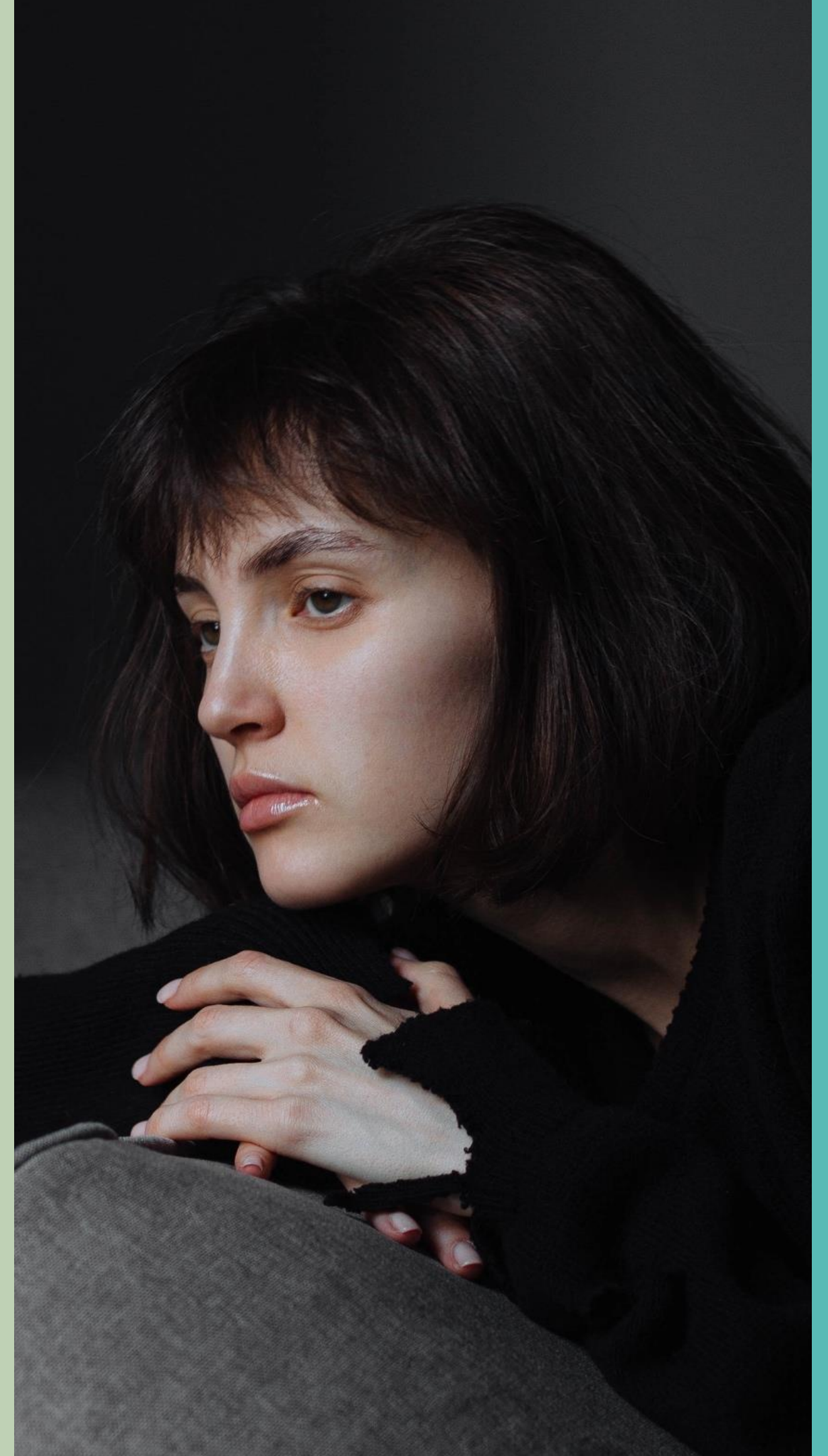
Definition & Employee Entitlements



- (UK definition) 'The spontaneous loss of a pregnancy between conception and up to 24 weeks' gestation'
- After 24 weeks' – stillbirth
- Categorisation substantial effect on rights at work
- Protected 'pregnancy-related sickness' (Equality Act, 2010)
- Government now committed to formally supporting pre-24 week losses - bereavement leave from April 2027...

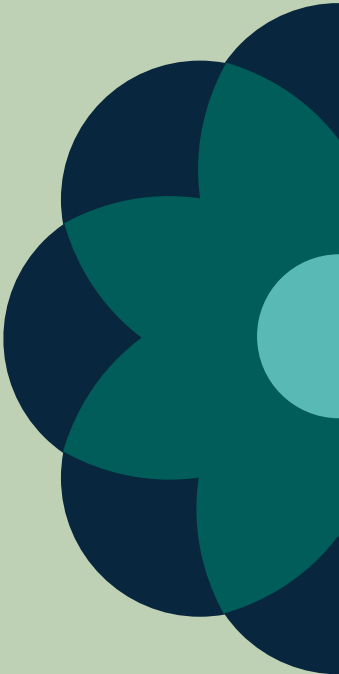
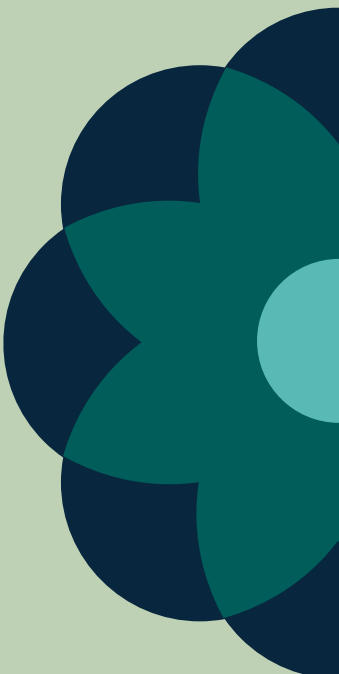
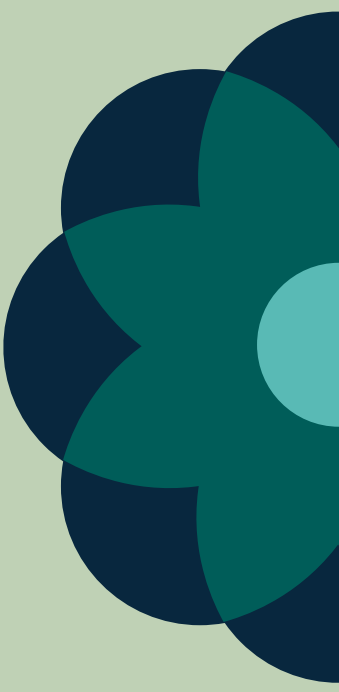
Types of Pregnancy Loss

- Natural miscarriage
- Missed/silent miscarriage
- Ectopic
- Pregnancy in Unknown Location (PUL)
- Molar pregnancy
- Chemical pregnancy
- Anembryonic pregnancy (blighted ovum)
- Termination for Medical Reason (TFMR)/Compassionate induction of labour for abnormalities
- Loss through surrogacy
- Recurrent miscarriage
- Termination or abortion



Prevalence

- It's often assumed that pregnancy loss is rare - but it occurs in **1 in 4** pregnancies
- **Miscarriage** is the most common adverse pregnancy outcome, affecting **1 in 5** pregnancies (Tommy's, 2023)
- The prevalence is **underestimated**, due to lack of reporting (WHO, 2019)
- Crucially, the **incidence is increasing**

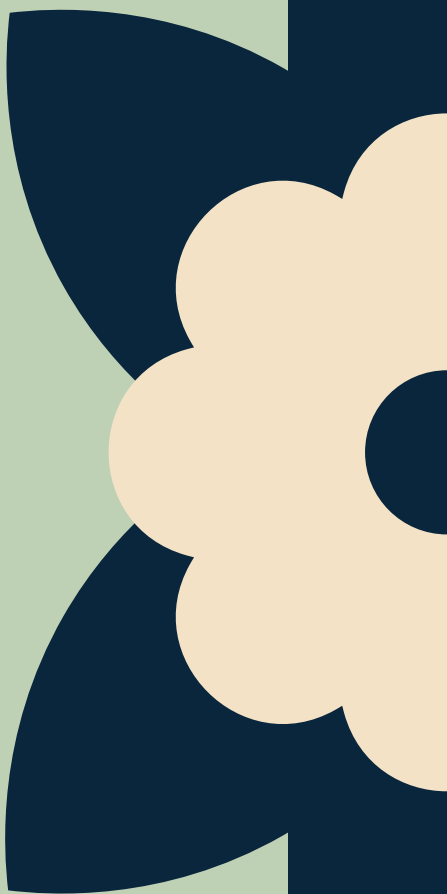


Physical effects

68% respondents indicated they did not receive enough information from healthcare professionals
(Miscarriage UK, 2026)

- Often traumatic, as they are unprepared for the physicality of loss
- Pain
- Blood loss (often significant and lengthy)
- Hormonal changes
- Infection
- Anaemia
- May begin at work

I just wasn't prepared for what I would go through, the reality of what a miscarriage is shocked and traumatised me.



Psychological effects

Over **68% respondents** stated they experienced mental health **problems** related to their pregnancy loss. However, **66% did not receive treatment** (Miscarriage UK, 2026).

✕ For some, a 'blip' in reproductive journey, even relief

✕ For most devastating/life altering

✕ A bereavement (use term 'baby')

✕ Shock/numbness/emptiness

✕ Inability to focus

✕ Jealousy and anger

✕ Sense of failure and shame

✕ Loss of control

For partners

- Most - significant grief
- 'Supporter role'
- 'Hold it together' - cannot process grief
- Mental health at risk
- Gender stereotypes



"People always ask 'how's your partner doing?'. She carried the baby and went through the physical side of it all, so I feel ridiculous for mentioning how I feel".

Potential impact at work:



Reduced employee well-being



Reduced engagement and productivity



Increased absenteeism, presenteeism and staff turnover (1 in 10 left their job)



Loss of female talent



Significant financial costs

- Work can be a distraction
- However, delayed recovery
- Some feel unable to disclose
- New legislation may help...

The changing legal landscape

- **Statutory bereavement leave extended** to include **pre-24-week pregnancy losses**
 - From **April 2027** (England, Wales and Scotland)
 - **Under Employment Rights Act**
 - **Two weeks, unpaid**
 - **Day one right** for both **person physically affected and partners**
 - **Taken flexibly**
 - **NI** separate statutory entitlement from April 2026 (two-weeks *paid* miscarriage leave, person affected and partners)
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- **Opportunities and challenges...**



Practical and Compassionate Responses

Practical and compassionate responses



Validation



Allowance re: performance



Do they work with other pregnant colleagues/service users?



Do they work with children?



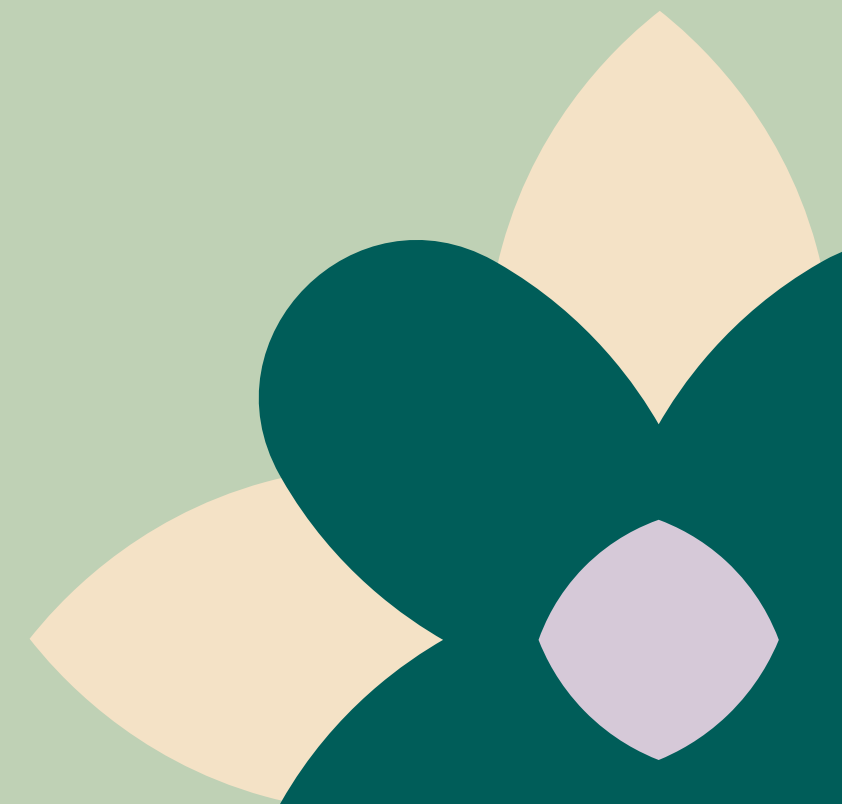
Do they have easy access to a toilet?



Difficult dates and anniversaries

Creating a supportive environment

- **Pregnancy Loss Policy** (our templates)
- **Paid leave**
- **Training**
- **Pregnancy Loss Pledge**
- Ambassadors
- External support - Miscarriage UK
- Internal formal support
- EAP - specialist counselling
- Resources
- Support groups
- Recognising awareness days/weeks
- Fundraising



Summary



It is paramount that all workplaces address the prevalent and significant issue of pregnancy loss, particularly in light of the forthcoming legal changes.



Failing to recognise it leads to negative effects on individuals, and indeed the organisation.



Employers should go beyond legal minimum wherever possible, providing compassionate, individual, inclusive and meaningful support.





Q&A



Miscarriage UK

Because every
loss matters