



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Ref: FOI2020/10943

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Mr Matthew Crawley
[request-695228-b4436ede@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

12 October 2020

Dear Mr Crawley,

Thank you for your email of 29 September 2020 requesting the following information:

“Please could you provide information on your policy with regard to bereavement leave entitlements across the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Is there a standard policy of 'x' number of days (paid or otherwise) or is there a different approach (i.e. use of compassionate leave, annual leave etc).

Also, does any leave policy include further considerations when an employee returns to work in terms of support offered?

If the policy has changed between 2015 - 2020, could you also highlight what these changes have been.”

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

In regard to the first question of your request, I can confirm that there is a standard approach across the single Services to bereavement leave, which is covered by the use of Compassionate leave, and is outlined in ‘*Joint Service Publication (JSP) 760: Tri-Service Regulations for Leave and Other Types of Absence*’. The authorisation and duration of compassionate leave rests with the individual’s Commanding Officer (CO), who may authorise up to four full weeks. However, two full weeks will normally be sufficient in the first instance.

Turning to the second question of your request, I can confirm that there is no leave policy that includes further considerations, but other arrangements may be made by COs to help the bereaved individual return to full work.

Finally, in regard to your third question, I can confirm that the policy has changed this year in order to cover the introduction of Parental Bereavement. In considering applications COs should treat each case individually on its merits and be mindful of Parental Bereavement granted under the Parental Bereavement (Leave & Pay) Act 2018.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that only in exceptional circumstances and following a re-examination of the circumstances should compassionate leave exceed 4 full weeks. In considering applications COs should treat each case individually on its merits and be mindful of Parental Bereavement granted under the Parental Bereavement (Leave & Pay) Act 2018.

You may also wish to note that whilst there are no policies that include further considerations when an employee returns to work, further periods of Compassionate Leave can be authorised, but as an exception, as Service personnel are expected to resolve their personal affairs within a reasonable timescale. Ongoing issues should be addressed by seeking alternative courses of action through single Service channels.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat FOI.