



What can employers do to protect parents from early-stage pregnancy loss?

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What can employers do to protect parents from early-stage pregnancy loss? Is it time for policy review?

Hannah Mahon says: "Miscarriage before the 24th week of pregnancy is not legally considered 'childbirth', meaning employees have no rights to leave or pay under maternity legislation.

"However, an employee is protected from discrimination. Often this will be pregnancy/maternity discrimination. The employee is protected from unfavourable treatment until two weeks after the pregnancy ends. Beyond this period employers are potentially at risk of sex or disability discrimination claims.

"Unfortunately proposed reforms such as the Employment Bill, neonatal leave and parental bereavement leave do not directly enhance protection here.

"Employers should be sensitive. Absence following miscarriage should be treated in the same way as pregnancy-related sickness, and leniency should be used when applying absence management policies. Employers can also address this in compassionate leave policies and/or offer additional leave (paid or unpaid).

"If an employee's partner suffers early miscarriage they may be entitled to unpaid leave as a dependent."

Read the full article [here](#).