

PREGNANCY LOSS:

Having open conversations
within the workplace



Who we are

Informing Choices NI (ICNI) is a sexual and reproductive health charity. Our vision is a society where everyone's sexual health and rights are protected and fulfilled.

We have over 35 years' experience of supporting people with difficult pregnancy experiences, including the provision of specialist counselling support following a pregnancy loss, neonatal loss, a traumatic birth and perinatal depression or anxiety.

Parental Bereavement Leave

The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 supports parents' right to take up to two weeks' paid time off work following the death of a child, if the child has died under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

This legislation also includes a provision to introduce regulations regarding leave and pay for employees who have experienced a miscarriage. These regulations are scheduled to be implemented no later than April 2026.

ICNI welcome this legislation. However, we believe that employees should have the right to have all of their pregnancy experiences acknowledged, valued, and receive ongoing support within the workplace following all types of pregnancy loss.

How do we define pregnancy loss or baby loss?

- Abortion: medical or surgical treatment to end a pregnancy.
- Ectopic pregnancy: when a fertilised egg implants and grows outside of the uterus.
- Embryo transfer loss: when an embryo transfer during fertility treatment doesn't result in pregnancy.
- Miscarriage: the loss of a pregnancy until 24 weeks of gestation.
- Molar pregnancy: when a non-viable fertilised egg implants in the uterus and will fail to reach full term.
- *Neonatal loss: the loss of a baby within the first 28 days after they are born.
- *Stillbirth: the loss of a pregnancy after 24 weeks, before or during birth.

**Please note that the law and employees' rights are different if they are affected by pregnancy or baby loss from 24 weeks.*

Pregnancy Loss Awareness

It is estimated that 1 in 3 pregnancies end in loss, however it can often feel that society does little to acknowledge the impact this can cause on individuals, and their family. Pregnancy loss can be shrouded in secrecy, creating a sense of isolation for those who have experienced such a loss.

It is also our experience that stigma relating to abortion remains pervasive in Northern Ireland, despite a change in legislation and lawful access to services.

ICNI understand that pregnancy loss can be experienced as a bereavement, and one not isolated to women or heterosexual couples.

We are also aware up to 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men develop mental health problems such as depression or anxiety during pregnancy, or in the first year after childbirth.

Pregnancy Loss Policy

ICNI are committed to supporting and driving change within the workplace, and wider society, in relation to pregnancy loss and have introduced a Pregnancy Loss Policy.

Our policy provides for up to two weeks' leave on full pay for employees who experience pregnancy loss, whether it occurs directly to them, a partner, or their surrogate.

The policy extends to all pregnancy loss, and all employees.

It also includes the introduction of mandatory Pregnancy Loss Awareness and Policy training for volunteers, staff and managers.

Get in touch

ICNI intend to champion this cause and will be encouraging other employers to adopt similar policies.

We can also support your workplace through the process with our Pregnancy Loss Awareness and Policy training for managers, staff and volunteers.

For more information, please email info@informingchoicesni.org or call our helpline on **028 90 316 100**.



**INFORMING
CHOICES NI**

Central Office
Informing Choices NI
3rd Floor, Ascot House
24-31 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast, BT2 7DB

Tel: **028 9031 6100**

Email: info@informingchoicesni.org

Website: www.informingchoicesni.org

Facebook: [/InformingChoicesNI](https://www.facebook.com/InformingChoicesNI)

Instagram: [informing.choices](https://www.instagram.com/informing.choices)

X: [@ICNI2019](https://twitter.com/ICNI2019)

Informing Choices NI (trading as ICNI) Ltd is a charity registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC107581).

Companies House registration number NI661550.