

Rt Hon Mark Spencer
Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Council
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

22 April 2022

Dear Mr Spencer

I am writing with the **support of over 51,500 members of the public to urge the Government to implement two weeks statutory bereavement leave for all**. In order for this to be implemented as soon as possible, the Government must urgently bring forward an Employment Bill in the Queen's Speech on Tuesday 10 May 2022. An Employment Bill is key to securing more comprehensive support for those who have been recently bereaved.

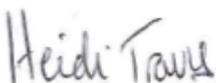
Sue Ryder knows that the journey through grief can be painful and complex, with **most of us experiencing bereavement and grief at some stage in our lives**. In response to this, we are paving the way for a national movement to support people through grief and the Government can make a crucial change to Employment Law to help with this.

Workplaces play an important role in supporting employees through their grief and mitigating its consequences - more is needed to support them to do this fairly. Currently many employers offer three to five days compassionate leave, but lower income workers in less secure jobs often don't have access to any leave. Our research in 2020 showed **24% of the working population in Britain had experienced a bereavement in the preceding 12 months**, which equates to around 7.9 million people.¹ The grief experienced by employees who have lost a loved one costs the UK economy £23bn a year, and costs HM Treasury nearly £8bn a year - through reduced tax revenues and increased use of NHS and social care resources; this figure will have substantially increased due to the pandemic. This could be changed.²

We strongly welcomed the Government's steps to introduce 'Jack's Law' and the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act in 2018. However, we believe that losing a close family member or partner can be just as painful and statutory bereavement leave must be introduced across the board. If the UK were to adopt a statutory minimum of two weeks bereavement leave for the loss of an immediate family member, it would enable all those suffering from a close bereavement to get the crucial time off to grieve and organise practical matters. Additionally, **this could lead to significant savings for the UK economy and the treasury in the long-term**, through reduced staff absence, higher employee productivity and a lesser reliance on the health and benefits system post-bereavement.

There's no time more important than now to recognise the support that is needed for those who've been bereaved. We urge the Government to bring forth an Employment Bill and to use the opportunity to ensure a better minimum standard of support for people navigating through grief, creating a more equal and compassionate society

Yours sincerely,



Heidi Travis
Chief Executive
Sue Ryder

¹ Census Wide/Sue Ryder (September 2020). Available at: https://www.sueryder.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Sue_Ryder_Grief_in_the_workplace_report_0.pdf

² Census Wide/Sue Ryder (September 2020). Available at: https://www.sueryder.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Sue_Ryder_Grief_in_the_workplace_report_0.pdf