

Policy on Dealing with a Workers Death

Introduction

This policy is designed to assist employees who are faced with the difficult situation of a colleague dying. It outlines the practical steps that Pabulum and its employees should take on the death of an employee.

However, this policy does not deal with the death of an employee at work, for example in a work-related accident. The organisation has separate obligations in relation to the reporting and recording of workplace accidents and deaths caused by work (for example industrial diseases) that are outside the scope of this policy.

Pabulum's information on the death of an employee

There are a number of ways in which Pabulum might be told of an employee's death. It might be contacted by the deceased's family/next of kin or told by another employee who is a close friend of the deceased. Pabulum might be informed by the authorities, for example after a catastrophic event such as a natural disaster or car crash, or by telephoning the employee's home to find out why they have not turned up for work. The death of the employee might be sudden or the result of a long illness of which individuals within the organisation are already aware.

When taking action on the death of an employee, line managers need to be flexible and sensitive to the particular circumstances. However, Pabulum will generally take steps under each of the following headings on the death of the employee.

Contacting the deceased's family/next of kin

Whatever way the information reaches the organisation, someone should, in the first instance, contact the deceased's family/next of kin to offer condolences.

This should normally be done by the deceased's line manager, although the contact with the family/next of kin could be made by another member of staff who is appropriately placed (by way of managerial position) and/or was close to the deceased. The representative should be offered advice and support before and after they contact the employee's family/next of kin, from initially the HR Manager and the Business Director.

The representative who contacts the family/next of kin should, while being sensitive to the particular circumstances of the death, ascertain the wishes of the family/next of kin regarding how staff and external contacts such as clients, are informed about the employee's death.

The representative should also ascertain the family's/next of kin's wishes regarding funeral arrangements, including whether flowers should be sent or a donation to their charity of choice made instead. The representative might also wish to ascertain where and when the funeral will take place, so that appropriate members of staff can attend.

Where the death occurs during the coronavirus crisis, members of staff may not be able to attend the employee's funeral due to the Government's guidelines on social distancing and funerals during the pandemic. If live streaming of the funeral is taking place, the representative could talk to the family member/next of kin about the potential for members of staff to participate. It might also be appropriate to talk about keeping in touch so that members of staff may be able to participate in any deferred memorial service.

Informing colleagues of the death of an employee

The release of information on the death of the employee is discretionary and line managers should not give out any information that is sensitive or contrary to the family's/next of kin's wishes or instructions.

Line managers must ensure that they take into account the wishes of the deceased's family/next of kin regarding how the announcement is made.

For front line staff, Operations Managers should communicate the news to those closest to the deceased (for example, those in the same school kitchen team) as promptly as possible. If this is done in person, it should be carried out in a private area such as a meeting room. For mobile staff, the Business Director should communicate the news to those closest to the deceased as promptly as possible. For office-based staff, the Managing Director will communicate the news and in his absence, the senior Company Director will carry out this function.

Pabulum would not normally notify the wider workforce at a later stage, but this may change on the recommendation of the Business Director.

The email should contain a contact for those who require further information, such as other colleagues who wish to attend the funeral (for example, colleagues with whom the deceased used to work closely and may not have been informed directly about the death).

Where the death occurs during the coronavirus crisis, the email should contain information about how members of staff can get involved in any gesture they may wish to make to honour the deceased, such as a donation to the family's/next of kin's charity of choice.

When colleagues are informed of the death either in person or via an email, it may be appropriate to direct them to external support services, for example [Cruse Bereavement Care/ataloss.org](https://www.cruisebereavementcare.org/).

Where the death occurs during the coronavirus crisis, it can be particularly difficult for those who are affected by the death to grieve because they may not have been able to say goodbye in the way that they might have wanted to, or because they may not be able to take advantage of their usual support networks due to isolation. It can, therefore, be even more important to direct them to appropriate support services such as <http://www.suddendeath.org/>.

Time off and funeral arrangements

Pabulum will allow employees appropriate time off to attend the funeral or memorial service. Unless the deceased's family/next of kin wish otherwise, it will normally be appropriate for some close work friends to attend the funeral or memorial service on behalf of Pabulum.



Where the death occurs during the coronavirus crisis, it may not be possible, due to the Government's requirements on social distancing and funerals, for members of staff to attend the funeral or memorial service. If a deferred memorial service is taking place at a later date, Pabulum allows employees appropriate time off to attend this service.

Informing third parties of the death of an employee

Line managers must ensure that they take into account the wishes of the deceased's family/next of kin regarding how the announcement is made to third parties.

All external contacts (for example clients) who dealt with the deceased should be informed about the death. This should normally be done by the deceased's line manager, although the contact with the third party could be made by another member of staff who knows the contact.

Making final salary payments

The HR Manager and the Finance Director will determine whether or not the deceased is due any outstanding wages. The deceased's estate will also be entitled to be paid in respect of accrued holiday that was untaken at the time of death.

The HR Team will calculate the deceased's final salary payment. The Payroll Manager will then pay it into their personal account, if the account has been frozen the payment will be returned and sent to the confirmed beneficiary. The HR Manager should obtain proof that the individual (normally the executor of any will) is the deceased's personal representative before making payment. The Payroll Manager will submit the FPS in the usual way which will notify HMRC of the death of the employee.

The HR Manager and Payroll Manager should ensure that any correspondence that is sent to the deceased's family/next of kin is not addressed to the deceased.

Other payments due on death of an employee

A surviving spouse/civil partner or other dependants of the deceased may be entitled to receive a payment under a survivor's pension, if the deceased was a member of a pension scheme (such as NEST, LGPS or Pabulum Company Pension Scheme). The Payroll Manager should inform the trustee(s) of any pension scheme about the employee's death. The trustee(s) will make arrangements for the payment to be made. The pension payment will be made to the surviving spouse/civil partner, the person specified on the deceased's expression-of-wishes form or the executor of the estate or personal representative.

In relation to any separate life assurance scheme, the HR Manager should approach the scheme provider, which will advise on any payments that are due and any evidence of death that may be required. If, at the date of death, the employee was in receipt of benefits from any permanent health insurance or long-term disability scheme run by Pabulum/The Quarr Group, the HR Manager should immediately notify the insurance provider of the death.

Other practical issues on the death of an employee

The HR Manager should ask the deceased's family/next of kin whether they wish to pack up their belongings or would prefer a close work colleague to do so instead.

Where the death occurs during the coronavirus crisis, and it is not possible to pack up the belongings straight away, they should make arrangements for doing so at a later date.



If relevant, the PA to the Company Directors should ensure that the deceased is removed from its telephone and email directories and website. They should also divert the deceased's telephone calls and emails to a responsible replacement.

Special arrangements for COVID 19 related death(s)

A Pabulum Crisis Response Team (CRT) will be established. Led by the Managing Director, the team will include the Business Director, the Head of Safety and the HR Manager; other members may be drawn into the team dependent on the issues related to the death. The Sales Director will provide legal support, deputising also in the absence of the Managing Director.

The team, on activation, will require:

- Secure communications – MS Teams, Whats App telephone group
- A nominated media spokesperson to control the environment, the journalist, the messaging and the interview
- A communications plan – internal and external
- A meeting schedule

Nelson Williams
Managing Director
1st June 2021

(This policy will be reviewed in May 2022)

