



# **Manifesto for the Scottish Parliamentary Elections:**

**The Bereavement Charter  
for Scotland**

# Introduction

Bereavement is a universal experience, touching every individual, family, and community in Scotland. Yet, the support available to those who are grieving remains inconsistent and, too often, inadequate. The Bereavement Charter for Scotland was created to address this gap- setting out a vision for a nation where everyone who experiences bereavement is met with understanding, compassion, and practical support.



## The Charter: Origin and Work

Launched in April 2020 after eighteen months of consultation and collaboration, the Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland was developed by a coalition of individuals and organisations, including NHS boards, charities, academic institutions, and community groups. The Charter contains 13 statements describing what good bereavement care and support should look like, aiming to guide individuals, communities, and workplaces in supporting those who are grieving. [[The Bereavement Charter for Adults and Children in Scotland](#) | [Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief](#)]

Work to realise the ambitions of the charter has included:

- Developing the **Bereavement Charter Mark for Workplaces**, which recognises employers who proactively support bereaved staff.
- Creating resources and toolkits for schools, employers, and communities.
- Advocating for bereavement to be recognised as a public health and social justice issue.



# The Economic and Public Health Benefits of Bereavement Support

Bereavement, if unsupported, can have significant economic and public health consequences. Research has shown that bereavement is associated with increased use of health and social care services, reduced workplace productivity, and greater risk of mental and physical ill-health. Compassionate bereavement support can: [\[bereavement-is-everyones-business-full-report\]](#)

- Reduce sickness absence and presenteeism in the workplace.
- Lower demand on NHS and social care services by mitigating the health impacts of complicated grief.
- Support children and young people through transitions, improving educational outcomes and long-term wellbeing.
- Strengthen community resilience and social cohesion.

Investment in bereavement support is not only the right thing to do - it is also economically prudent, reducing costs to public services and employers alike.



# Our Asks for the Next Scottish Parliament



## 1. Appoint a National Bereavement Lead

- **Ask:** Create a dedicated role within Scottish Government to coordinate bereavement policy and practice across departments.
- **Benefit:** Ensures a joined-up, strategic approach, maximising the impact of existing resources and closing current gaps in provision



## 2. Expand the Bereavement Charter Mark for Workplaces and Schools

- **Ask:** Provide £250,000 over three years to support the Charter Mark's rollout, and promote its adoption across public, private, and third sector employers, as well as schools.
- **Benefit:** Fosters compassionate, supportive environments for staff and students, reducing absenteeism and improving mental health. [[goodlifedevelopment.org.uk](http://goodlifedevelopment.org.uk)]



## 3. Develop a National Bereavement Strategy

- **Ask:** Co-produce a national strategy for bereavement support, building on the Charter and addressing gaps in the current palliative care strategy.
- **Benefit:** Delivers consistent, high-quality support across Scotland, ensuring no one falls through the cracks.



## 4. Prioritise Succession Rights in the Housing Bill

- **Ask:** Implement actions to protect the housing rights of terminally ill people and bereaved families.
- **Benefit:** Prevents homelessness and housing insecurity at times of acute vulnerability.



# The Benefit to Society

By adopting these measures, Scotland can become a world leader in compassionate bereavement support. The benefits will be felt in healthier workplaces, stronger communities, improved public health, and a more resilient, caring society. Every pound invested in bereavement support returns value many times over through reduced demand on services, improved productivity, and, most importantly, lives better supported through loss.

For further information please see: [The Bereavement Charter for Adults and Children in Scotland | Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief](#)





**For more information on this Manifesto, please contact:**  
[rebecca@palliativecarescotland.org.uk](mailto:rebecca@palliativecarescotland.org.uk)