



5 September 2023

Email:

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

**Request No:** 11352-23  
**Subject:** Absence Code – Bereavement/Grief  
**Date Received:** 06/06/2023  
**Date of Monitoring:** 07/06/2023

Thank you for your request for information received on 6 June 2023 which was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health and Social Care Trust has now completed its search for the information you requested and that is detailed below. The Trust would fully apologise for the delay in the provision of a response.

**Question**

The NHS Data Dictionary is used to determine the absence code when an employee is absent due to illness/injury. As there is no code which specifically relates to 'Bereavement/Grief' how do you accurately record absence related to bereavement/grief?

**Answer**

The employee absence sickness reasons outlined in the NHS Data Dictionary, and processed via NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR), do not apply to Health & Social Care Northern Ireland (HSCNI) employers.

HSCNI employers process employee records using a discrete Human Resources, Payroll, Travel & Subsistence (HRPTS) system. HRPTS includes a specific sickness absence reason code "MH07 Grief/Bereavement". Where an employee identifies bereavement/grief as their reason for sickness absence, via self-certification or GP fit note, this code will be utilised.

However, please note that an employee may not always specify bereavement/grief as their reason for sickness absence. For example, a GP fit note may state stress, anxiety or depression but not specifically reference bereavement/grief as the causation factor, in which case the corresponding sickness absence code will be used.

I hope the above fully assists you.



Please note that, under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, if you wish to publish or otherwise use this information besides for your own means, you will need to seek our permission to do so.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Director of Planning, Performance and Corporate Services, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) HSC Trust, Site 30, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8SG.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the Trust has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

**Website:** [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)  
**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF  
**Telephone:** 028 9027 8757 or 0303 123 1114 (Belfast based Office)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that NIAS replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.niamb.co.uk>. Personal details in respect of your request will have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

*(not signed – issued by email)*

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**Information Governance Team**