

Findings from one of the largest consultations on UK bereavement support published

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New findings from one of the largest ever consultations on bereavement support in the U.K. have been published today by the UK Commission

on Bereavement (UKCB). The research, which involved University of Bristol academics, shows around 750,000 excess bereavements occurred during the pandemic in the U.K.

The scale of loss across the U.K. since the pandemic has been laid bare in the report, "[Bereavement is everyone's business](#)," with around 750,000 excess bereavements during this period compared to the previous five years.

The UKCB found huge gaps in support for bereaved people. More than 40% of adult respondents who wanted formal [bereavement](#) support said they did not get any. Of the bereaved children who contributed to the report, half said they did not get the support they needed from their schools and colleges.

The findings follow one of the largest ever consultations on bereavement support undertaken in the U.K., which included over 1,000 adult and 100 child respondents to the UKCB's survey and evidence submitted from over 130 organizations.

This has led to the UKCB calling for more funding from all governments in the U.K., and it is sending a clear message that robust strategies to deal with bereavement now and in the future are desperately needed. In addition, the UKCB says schools and employers should be required to have a bereavement policy.

Today's UKCB report also identified that there is a particular need to focus on better supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and others who are currently poorly served. Additionally, it says that many people facing bereavement are amongst the very hardest hit by the cost of living crisis and that bereavement related benefits must be extended to key groups who currently miss out and increased at least in line with costs of living.

The UKCB has been supported by a steering group made up of third sector organizations and charities: Marie Curie, Independent Age, Cruse Bereavement Support, the National Bereavement Alliance, the Childhood Bereavement Network and the Center for Mental Health, working in partnership with [academic researchers](#): Dr. Emily Harrop at Cardiff University and Dr. Lucy Selman at the University of Bristol.

Dr. Lucy Selman, from the Palliative and End of Life Care Research Group and the Center for Academic Primary Care at the University of Bristol, said, "Bereavement is a natural part of life but can be a devastating experience with a significant impact on health and well-being. The UKCB report highlights both the sheer scale of unmet need for bereavement support in the UK, as well as current inequities in access to support. I have been honored to work with the Commission and urge policy makers to respond with appropriate investment in bereavement and [mental health](#) services."

The UKCB is independent of all U.K. governments and is chaired by The Right Reverend and Right Honorable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, the Bishop of London. She is joined by 15 commissioners reflecting diverse professional and cultural backgrounds from across the four U.K. nations. The UKCB asked for evidence of bereavement experiences from the last five years although it is apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated challenges around bereavement for many people.

Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, The Bishop of London and Chair of the Commission says, "Today's report demonstrates the urgent need to improve people's experiences of bereavement, and the report sets out our positive vision for how we can better support everyone who is bereaved across the U.K. To make this vision a reality we must work together, recognizing that grief really is everyone's business. We are calling on the governments of all four nations as well as organizations across the public, private and third sectors, and all of us from faith and community

groups to deliver ongoing change in policy, practice, and culture.

"We will never cure grief. Grief naturally follows the love we have for the people we lose. But it is clear that more must be done to get extra care to those who need it. We believe that governments could transform people's experiences of bereavement by investing just 79p per person in statutory funding. I pray that this report will go some way to illuminating a path forward and offering new hope for the future."

Provided by University of Bristol

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