

Looking for work

You may decide to [stop working](#) when you are diagnosed with cancer. [Looking for a new job](#) after cancer treatment can be a positive part of your recovery. You may decide to return to the kind of work you did before, but with a different employer. Or you may want a change of career.

You may wonder whether you have to tell a new employer you have or have ever had cancer. If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, the Equality Act 2010 covers this. It says that the company you are applying to can ask about disability, but they must follow the law.

If you live in Northern Ireland, employers can ask applicants about their health. But the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says they cannot discriminate against you because of your disability.

Tips for going back to work

- Be informed. Knowing more about cancer and its treatments can help you understand the possible effects on your work life. Your cancer doctor or nurse will give you more information.
- [Know your rights](#). If you have or have had cancer, the law considers this a disability. It is unlawful for a potential employer to [discriminate](#) against a person because of their disability. This was made law under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.
- If you are asked questions about your health, it may be best to be honest about the cancer. Lying or giving incomplete information could put you in a difficult position later, if your employer finds out. But this is your decision.
- An employer can only ask questions about your health before they offer you a job in certain circumstances. Our booklet [Work and cancer](#) has more information.
- If you do not get the job as a result of telling the employer about the cancer, you may be able to bring a discrimination claim against them.
- Both the Equality Act and the DDA say your employer has to make [reasonable adjustments](#) to your workplace and working practices. This is to try to support you to do your job. Our booklet [Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer](#) has more information.
- In Northern Ireland, employers can ask job applicants about their health. But under the DDA, they cannot discriminate against you because of your disability.
- [Before an interview](#), think about how you will answer any questions about your health. For example, they may ask you about gaps in your work history. You can explain that you were dealing with some health issues. Be clear that you are now ready and keen to get back to work. Try to focus on the skills and strengths you have.
- There are different organisations that can help Disabled people find work. You can find more information at [gov.uk](#) if you live in England, Scotland and Wales or [nidirect.gov.uk](#) if you live in Northern Ireland.
- If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, [Access to Work](#) can also provide someone to help you at a job interview. It can also help people who are about to start a job.
- If you live in Northern Ireland, contact your [Jobs and Benefits Office or Jobcentre Plus](#) for information about getting support.
- Manage your finances. While you are unemployed or on a low income, you may be entitled to claim benefits. [Benefits](#) are payments from the government to people in need. Call **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a Macmillan financial guide.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on be.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [Help with the cost of cancer](#)
- [Work and cancer](#)
- [Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer.](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Further Macmillan support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Or visit macmillan.org.uk where you can [chat online](#) to one of our team.

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

Our free [Macmillan Buddy service](#) can arrange weekly calls or visits with a friendly volunteer who understands what you're going through.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

Other useful contact details

- Access to Work (England, Scotland and Wales) – visit gov.uk/access-to-work or call **0800 121 7479**
- Access to Work (Northern Ireland) – visit nidirect.gov.uk
- Macmillan Work Support Service – visit macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork or call **0808 808 00 00**

Notes and questions
