

# Managing cancer in the workplace

**Work and cancer series**



Working with the

**CIPD**

# The Macmillan work and cancer series

This booklet is part of a series. Macmillan produces a range of other information about work and cancer.

## For people living with cancer:

- [Work and cancer](#)

## For employers:

- [10 top tips for line managers](#)

## For people caring for someone with cancer:

- [Working while caring for someone with cancer](#)

## For self-employed people with cancer:

- [Self-employment and cancer](#)

## More information:

- [Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer](#)

# About this booklet

This booklet is about how you can support people affected by cancer in the workplace. It is for managers, HR professionals and employers. This booklet has been produced in [partnership with the CIPD](#).

This booklet has information about:

- practical actions you can take, including examples of best practice
- your responsibilities as an employer, and your employees' rights
- understanding your employees who have cancer, or who care for someone who does
- how to reduce the impact on your organisation.

This booklet also has information about the extra support Macmillan could offer your organisation, including more training, resources and consultancy. This programme is called [Macmillan at Work](#).

## How to use this booklet

This booklet is split into sections to help you find what you need. You do not have to read it from start to finish. You can use the [contents list](#) to help you.

It is fine to skip parts of the booklet. You can always come back to them when you feel ready.

At the [end of the booklet](#), there are details of other organisations that can help.

There is also space to write down [questions and notes](#).

## Quotes

In this booklet, we have included quotes from people who have managed someone affected by cancer. These are from people who have chosen to share their story with us. To share your experience, visit [macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory](https://macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory)

## For more information

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](https://macmillan.org.uk)

If you would prefer to speak to us in another language, interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you want to use.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call us using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app.

We have some information in different languages and formats, including audio, eBooks, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call **0808 808 00 00**.

## About the CIPD

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people, supporting our economies and societies. It's the professional body for human resources, learning and development, organisational development and all people professionals. It is an expert in people, work and change. With over 160,000 members globally it gives trusted advice and offers independent thought leadership. It also has a growing community using its research, insights and learning. The CIPD is a leading voice in the call for good work that creates value for everyone.



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# Getting started

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# Key facts about work and cancer

Employers can make a huge difference to the working lives of people affected by cancer. They can often do this by:

- making reasonable adjustments for the employee
- providing a supportive working environment
- being compassionate.

Reasonable adjustments are changes that allow your employee to keep working or come back to work. These can be changes to the workplace or changes to their job. About two-thirds (64%) of organisations that make these adjustments consider them easy to make.

Reasonable adjustments can be made for individuals who are either:

- employees (directly employed)
- workers (employed through an agency).

A cancer diagnosis can also affect the family and friends of the person who has been diagnosed. For example, a family member may become a carer for the person with cancer. A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to someone who could not manage without their help. [Employees who are carers](#) may need to change how or when they work.

# Why work is important for someone affected by cancer

Work is important for many people living with cancer and for carers. This may be because a job:

- provides an income
- provides social contact
- can help keep or bring back a sense of normality, routine and stability
- can help with recovery and lead to better health.

Managers and employers can play an important role in supporting people with cancer and their carers. But you may not always know the best way to support them. There can be challenges. Challenges at the time of diagnosis may be different from challenges during treatment. Challenges may also arise when the employee is returning to work, or afterwards.

Employers usually have to balance the needs of:

- other people in the workplace
- the organisation as a whole
- the person affected by cancer.

This can sometimes cause difficult situations. You may be affected in both a practical and personal way. This information can help.

# Benefits of being a supportive employer

Supporting an employee affected by cancer can help them deal with this difficult time. You can help reduce their anxiety, and give them the confidence to cope with cancer at work.

There are other clear benefits to supporting people affected by cancer at work:

- Better engagement – it may promote a greater sense of loyalty from your employee and their colleagues. This will usually have a positive impact on employees.
- Positive image – a company or organisation that supports employees affected by cancer may be more attractive to job applicants and customers.
- Fulfilling your legal obligations – people affected by cancer have legal rights. These include reasonable adjustments at work under the Equality Act 2010 in England, Scotland and Wales, or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland. Meeting the requirements of these laws may help avoid having to pay discrimination compensation. It will also help avoid the cost of management time, legal fees and potential damage to reputation.
- Saving time and money – you can avoid the cost and time of recruiting and training new employees. The CIPD estimates the median cost of recruitment is £3,000 for senior managers and directors, and £1,500 for other employees. The median is the middle number in a set of data.

# Simple first steps you can take

[Reasonable adjustments](#) are changes to the workplace or working arrangements that allow your employee to keep working or come back to work. Making reasonable adjustments is a legal obligation. They can make a big difference to your employees and your organisation.

Reasonable adjustments could include:

- allowing time off for medical appointments
- offering flexible working
- giving some duties to another employee
- organising a gradual (phased) return to work.

These changes are normally easy to make. They do not have to be disruptive. Many adjustments are free. If there is some cost, it is usually small. Grants from [Access to Work](#) schemes can cover some or all of the cost. Visit [gov.uk/access-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

## Check your policies are up to date

You may want to check your policies are up to date. These include policies about:

- sickness
- long-term conditions
- health and well-being
- emergency leave.

You may also want to introduce a cancer-specific policy. Or your company may have general policies that can apply to employees with cancer and employees who are carers. It is important to make sure these policies are easy to understand. They should explain the difference between managing short-term absence and managing someone with a long-term condition such as cancer. They should also include information about managing an employee who is also a carer. We have a cancer policy template which you might like to use. You can download this from [macmillan.org.uk/employer](https://macmillan.org.uk/employer)

## Provide training for managers

[Macmillan at Work](#) offers training and resources to enable employers to provide better workplace support for employees living with or affected by cancer. The programme works to raise awareness about the rights of people with cancer in the workplace. It also helps human resources (HR) and line managers to feel more confident dealing with cancer in the workplace.

We have more information about Macmillan at Work on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/atwork](https://macmillan.org.uk/atwork)



## Educate employees

We produce the [Work and cancer toolkit](#) to help employers support people affected by cancer. It is designed to be shared with employees at your organisation who are affected by cancer. Other employees can also use it to learn more about cancer. If you do not already have the toolkit, you can order one by signing up at [macmillan.org.uk/atwork](https://macmillan.org.uk/atwork)

## Raise awareness of cancer

Whether you have an employee with cancer or not, you may want to raise awareness of cancer in your organisation. You could highlight the support you can offer if an employee is affected by cancer in the future.

This could mean encouraging staff to take part in fundraising. Or you could put up a poster promoting cancer awareness months. There is a poster in Macmillan's [Work and cancer toolkit](#).

**“ When Julia told me about her diagnosis, it was a shock. I hadn't been in that situation before where I needed to manage someone facing cancer, so I didn't know what to expect. ”**

Judy, line manager of Julia who was diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer

# Why line managers are important

If you are a line manager, you may be managing a person with cancer or someone who is caring for someone with cancer. You are an important source of support for that employee because of the following:

- You are often the first person the employee contacts when they are unwell and cannot go to work.
- You are responsible for the day-to-day management of the employee. This responsibility will continue throughout cancer diagnosis, treatment and the return of the employee to work.
- You play an important role in making any [reasonable adjustments](#) for the employee.
- You may be the first person the employee contacts when they need to talk to human resources (HR) or the occupational health team.
- You manage the employee's workload and can change the level of pressure or demand on them. This will be important if the employee is returning to work after some time off.
- You can help make sure the employee is not too stressed when they come back to work after time off. This can help to avoid the need for more time off.

If you are a line manager, you should contact your HR manager. If you have an [occupational health team](#), you should also contact them. They can give you the information and support you need as a manager. This could be:

- guidance about the employee's health condition
- advice on any reasonable adjustments needed
- information about their return-to-work plan.

You might find it helpful to discuss your worries with occupational health or your HR manager. But if an employee wants to keep their diagnosis confidential, you must respect this.

The [CIPD](#) has a guide for line managers on managing long-term health conditions. Visit [cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/manager-guide-long-term-health-conditions](https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/manager-guide-long-term-health-conditions) We also have more information in our [10 top tips](#).





# 10 top tips for line managers

When an employee has cancer or is caring for someone with cancer, they will need your support. They may be dealing with physical, emotional and financial issues.

These tips will help you support your employee from diagnosis, through treatment and living with cancer.

## 1 Remember that communication is important

Listen to your employee and try to understand their situation. It is fine to ask questions when they are sharing information with you. It is important to keep in contact with them if they are on sick leave. Agree together how and when you will keep in contact. Put this in writing. Remember to review these plans regularly. Their situation, and how they want to be contacted, may change.

## 2 Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments

Cancer is legally defined as a disability. Under equality laws, you may need to make changes to the workplace or the employee's job that allow them to stay in work or come back to work. These changes are called [reasonable adjustments](#). If you have an HR manager or [occupational health team](#), they can give you advice.

### **3 Respect your employee's right to privacy**

Your employee may not want their colleagues to know that they have cancer or are caring for someone with cancer. If they do want their colleagues to know, ask them how and when they would like people to be told.

### **4 Be sensitive to your employee's needs**

The physical, emotional and practical effects of cancer, and cancer treatment, are different for each person. What is best for one employee may not be right for another. Make time to understand your employee's individual needs.

### **5 Check guidelines and policies**

Check whether your company or organisation has any guidelines and policies to support your employee and help you manage the situation. These may include guidance about sickness absence, long-term conditions, time off work and occupational health.

### **6 Find out about financial support**

Find out whether your organisation offers financial support to people who are off work, such as sick pay. You may also want to check whether there are any other benefits that could help your employee. You could suggest they talk to a Macmillan financial guide or welfare rights adviser. They can call us on **0808 808 00 00**, or visit [macmillan.org.uk/moneyworries](http://macmillan.org.uk/moneyworries)

## 7 Respect carers' rights at work

If an employee is caring for a person who has cancer, they may need your support. Carers have certain rights at work, including taking unpaid time off to care for the person they look after in an emergency. Flexible working could make it easier for carers to keep working. Any employee has the right to request flexible working. The [CIPD](https://cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/carer-friendly-workplace) has more information about carers at work. Visit [cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/carer-friendly-workplace](https://cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/carer-friendly-workplace)

## 8 Discuss a return-to-work plan

If your employee is off work, agree a plan with them for keeping in contact. When they are ready, talk with them about a return-to-work plan. This can help you find out what support they might need at work before, during and after treatment. Their [return-to-work plan](#) might involve a gradual (phased) return. This means increasing their hours slowly over a period of time. Or it might mean you slowly handing over work to them. You could also consider reasonable adjustments to support their well-being. After the employee returns to work, it is good practice to have regular discussions about how things are going and if any changes are needed.

## 9 Recognise the impact on your team

Be aware of the impact that a cancer diagnosis in the team can have on colleagues and on you. If you need more support, talk to your line manager, your HR manager, or call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.

## 10 Remember that Macmillan is here to help

We are here to help everyone affected by cancer, including family, friends, carers and employers. If you or your employees have questions about cancer, call our support line free on **0808 808 00 00**. Or visit [macmillan.org.uk/work](https://macmillan.org.uk/work) for expert training, resources and guidance.

We also have a programme called [Macmillan at Work](#) that might be helpful.

**“ I just continued to be off work, there was no meeting to discuss what was going to happen to my job, I didn't know when I would stop getting my full salary or what affected this. I just wanted to understand the facts so I could plan. ”**

Kira, diagnosed with breast cancer



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# Understanding cancer

If you are a line manager, you may be one of your employee's most important sources of support. Having a basic understanding of cancer and its treatment can help you recognise and plan for any issues that may develop at work. You are not expected to be a medical expert, but it is important to listen and be comfortable talking about sensitive issues such as a cancer diagnosis.

There are lots of types of cancer. Each has its own name and treatment. There are about 3 million people in the UK living with cancer, and that number is increasing. On average, people are living with cancer for longer than they did in the past.

We have an animation on our website that explains what cancer is. You can watch it at [macmillan.org.uk/cancer](https://macmillan.org.uk/cancer)

We have more information about different types of cancer and cancer treatments on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/cancer-types](https://macmillan.org.uk/cancer-types)



## How cancer may impact someone at work

Cancer and its treatment can affect people's work in different ways. It can depend on:

- the type of cancer
- the stage of the cancer (its size and whether it has spread)
- the symptoms that the cancer is causing
- the type of treatment and its side effects
- how the person copes with the diagnosis
- the type of job they have.

Some people find working helps them have a routine and feel in control. Being able to keep working or go back to work can help people cope while they are waiting for a diagnosis. It can also help someone having treatment or caring for someone with cancer. Some people need to work for financial reasons.

Some people stop working. This might be because the cancer is advanced, or because the cancer symptoms or side effects from treatment make it impossible to work. Other people may not feel able to work because they have lost their confidence.

If your [employee is caring for someone with cancer](#), they may need to work fewer hours or stop working.

Before an employee decides to leave their job, it is important that you talk to them about their options. This might include arrangements that could help them stay in work, such as changing working hours or changing to another role in the company.

# Treatment and side effects

Learning more about cancer treatments can help you understand how treatment may affect your employee.

Cancer can be unpredictable. Someone with cancer may need to have lots of hospital appointments and treatment for a long time. This may mean they need time off work at short notice.

Many people have side effects from cancer treatment. These may change over time. For example, your employee may become very tired (fatigued). We have [more information about fatigue](#).

After certain treatments, some people may need to go back to hospital for regular outpatient appointments. For example, they may have speech therapy or physiotherapy.

If the treatment affects how parts of the body work, it may stop the person doing some parts of their job.

Ask them to let you know how treatment is going. This is so you can understand how their symptoms and treatment affect their job. You can then review their working arrangements and duties. You may be able to make [reasonable adjustments](#) to help. For example, you could let them:

- have frequent breaks
- have access to a fridge to store medicines
- work different hours
- work from home
- reduce the number of hours they work.

We have more information about some of the main cancer treatments. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/treatments-and-drugs](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/treatments-and-drugs) We also have more information about other side effects that we do not mention here in our booklet [Side effects of cancer treatment](#).

## Surgery

How long your employee is in hospital depends on the type of surgery they have. It also depends on their recovery.

This will affect the amount of time off work your employee will need to recover.

## Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy uses high-energy rays called radiation to treat cancer. This destroys cancer cells in the area where the radiotherapy is given.

Radiotherapy only takes a few minutes. But travelling to and from the hospital and waiting in hospital for treatment can fill a large part of the day. A course of treatment may take several weeks.

Some people feel able to work during radiotherapy. But they may need to reduce their hours.

Sometimes people are able to have treatment outside working hours, but this is not always possible.

Some people need to stop working during radiotherapy, and for a few weeks afterwards.

### Side effects of radiotherapy

Radiotherapy can make you very tired. Some people find the more radiotherapy they have, the more tired they become. Other side effects depend on what part of the body is being treated. Talk to your employee to see if they feel able to work during their radiotherapy treatment.

We have more information about the side effects of radiotherapy on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/side-effects-radiotherapy](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/side-effects-radiotherapy)





**“ After surgery to the lymph nodes, I had chemotherapy and radiotherapy. I was able to continue working during my treatment but changed the way that I worked. I was supported by my employer to do so. ”**

Julia, diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer

## Chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy

Chemotherapy uses anti-cancer (cytotoxic) drugs to destroy cancer cells.

Targeted therapy uses drugs to find and attack cancer cells. Some people have targeted therapy alongside other cancer treatments.

Immunotherapy uses the immune system to find and attack cancer cells. The immune system protects the body against illness and infection.

Some chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy drugs can be given as outpatient treatment. This means the person does not stay in hospital overnight. But depending on the drugs the person is having, outpatient treatment can fill a large part of the day.

If they are not having outpatient treatment, your employee may need to go into hospital overnight, or for a few days.

They may have the drugs as an injection into a vein (intravenously), as tablets or as an injection into muscle or fat.

People usually have a break of a few days or weeks between treatments. This gives them time to recover. Some people cannot work because they are too unwell. Others may take a few days off after each treatment and work fewer hours.

## Side effects

These can include:

- risk of infection
- risk of bleeding
- fatigue (tiredness)
- hair loss
- feeling sick
- flu-like symptoms
- diarrhoea.

If your employee feels well enough to work, they may need to do things to reduce their risk of infection. This could include working from home if possible. Or it could mean working different hours so they can travel to and from work at quieter times. These adjustments could mean they are around fewer people who may have an infection.

Before making any changes, talk to your employee and ask what advice they have had from their healthcare team.



## Hormonal therapy

Hormonal therapy works by altering the production or activity of particular hormones in the body. Your employee may have hormonal therapy drugs as tablets or injections.

### Side effects of hormonal therapy

Hormonal therapy does not usually affect a person's ability to work as much as some other cancer treatments. But it can cause:

- fatigue (tiredness)
- weight gain
- hot flushes
- nausea (feeling sick)
- muscle pain.

Talk to your employee to see if there are things you could do at work to help with any of these side effects.

## Coping with fatigue

Fatigue means feeling tired or exhausted. It is a very common problem for people with cancer.

People with cancer may get tired more quickly after less activity. For some people, fatigue may continue for months or sometimes years, even if their treatment has finished.

Fatigue can affect people in different ways. It may get worse during different stages of cancer treatment or at different times of day. It may mean your employee:

- finds it harder to do certain tasks
- has less strength and energy than they did before
- has difficulty concentrating and remembering things
- becomes exhausted during meetings or after tasks that did not tire them out before.

Because of fatigue and other effects of cancer and its treatment, your employee may be unable to work for long periods of time.

If your employee is caring for someone who has cancer, that person's fatigue can affect them too. They may need more time off to look after the person with cancer.

You can help your employee cope with fatigue by making some adjustments at work. For example, you could let them:

- work flexible hours
- work from home
- work different or reduced hours
- change to doing some gentler or easier tasks
- have more breaks to rest or go for a short walk outside.

Ask your employee what might work best for them. We have more information about [these kinds of adjustments](#).

We have more information about how fatigue can affect someone. Your employee might like to read it too. There is also more information about fatigue in our booklet [Coping with fatigue \(tiredness\)](#) and on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/fatigue](http://macmillan.org.uk/fatigue)

## Changes in appearance

Cancer and its treatment can change the way a person looks. These changes may be temporary or permanent. Changes in appearance will depend on the person's situation, but can include:

- hair loss
- changes in skin tone
- scarring
- weight loss or gain.

Changes like these could affect how your employee thinks and feels about their body. You and your colleagues may need to prepare for this.

**“ It's something that really isn't understood outside of the cancer community. They see the hair's grown back and you're back at work. They don't understand that it's not the same. You don't have the same energy, the same drive. They don't understand the side effects that have happened. ”**

Ryan, diagnosed with testicular cancer

# Emotional effects of cancer

Being diagnosed with cancer and having treatment can have a huge impact on someone. It can also affect their family, friends and colleagues.

Going for tests and waiting for the results can be a worrying time. Your employee may want to keep their situation private (confidential) at this point.

When someone is diagnosed with cancer, they may feel shock and denial at first. Some people take a while to accept that they have cancer. They may try to carry on as if nothing has changed. They may feel many different emotions, including:

- anger
- sadness
- fear
- loneliness.

Your employee may need some time off work if they, or a family member or friend, are diagnosed with cancer. They may want to be with people they trust, and try to recover from the shock before coming back to work. The CIPD in partnership with Mind produces a guide for more practical advice on mental health. Visit [cipd.org/en/knowledge/guides/mental-health-support-guide](https://www.cipd.org/en/knowledge/guides/mental-health-support-guide)

## If your employee becomes upset

Cancer can cause many different emotions. Your employee's mood might change quickly and unexpectedly.

If this happens to your employee at work, it might help to offer them a private space for a while. Or you could suggest they go home for the rest of the day. Ask if they would like you to contact a family member or friend to travel home with them.

### Your own emotions

You and your colleagues may also have strong feelings. This is natural. You can ask for support to help you cope with your own emotions. It may help to talk to another manager in your workplace. Or your work may offer an employee assistance programme or counselling.

Remember to think about confidentiality and how much the person wants others to know.

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on  
**0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.



# After treatment

Many people recover well and can go back to their usual working life after treatment has ended. But having and recovering from cancer can have a big physical and emotional impact. Some people find getting back to work difficult.

People may struggle with tiredness (fatigue), their emotions and any changes to their body caused by the treatment.

Some treatments leave people with long-term side effects, such as:

- fatigue for many months, or sometimes years
- pain, swelling or lack of movement in a limb
- only being able to eat little and often
- needing to use the toilet more often.

People often want to get back to work. But they might have difficulty going back to their job. They need your understanding and support to do this successfully. It is also important to support them over time. This is because long-term side effects may improve but then come back.

The CIPD has a guide on managing a return to work after long term sickness absence. Visit [cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/managing-return-to-work-after-long-term-absence](https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/managing-return-to-work-after-long-term-absence)

Some people recover well after treatment and are never affected again by the cancer. For some people, cancer can come back after treatment. This means they need to have more treatment. Other people may be living with cancer that cannot be cured.

Some people will die from the cancer. It can be a shock when a colleague dies, especially if it is soon after a diagnosis. You can speak to a specialist on the Macmillan Support Line at **0808 808 00 00**. Or you may find our booklet [After someone dies – coping with bereavement](#) helpful.

**“ The challenge for me was getting the work balance right for Julia. I was aware she wanted to return but didn’t want her to be doing too much too soon. I also I didn’t want to upset her by taking work away from her. ”**

Judy, line manager of Julia who was diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer



# If your employee is a carer

Your employee may be caring for someone who has cancer. Becoming a carer might not be something they have planned for. It can be physically and emotionally demanding.

Getting the right balance between caring and working can be difficult. Working carers have legal rights, which aim to help them keep working. These include the right to time off during an emergency. Every employee also has the right to request flexible working after a certain period of employment.

Caring duties may mean that an employee needs some time off. They might take sick leave or annual leave when there is an emergency, rather than asking for time off to care for someone with cancer. This is often because people do not know that their caring role is a reason to request leave. Or the employee may not want to tell you they are caring for someone.

Cancer can be unpredictable. Someone with cancer may need long courses of treatment, with lots of hospital appointments. This means their carer may need time off work at short notice. Side effects and symptoms can also continue after treatment finishes. This means they may need time off for a while. You may need to be flexible about this.

As soon as you know that an employee is caring for someone, talk to them about:

- any leave and flexible working policies
- their rights as a carer and their options for leave
- what you need from them
- any information they can provide to help you support them.

## **Their health and well-being**

Caring can affect the carer's ability to work. They may find it difficult to concentrate or feel tired from lack of sleep. Being a carer can also make health problems they may have worse. For example, it can make their blood pressure or back problems worse. They may need time off to look after their own health.

They may feel guilty or lose confidence if they are unable to do their usual work while they are caring. Being a carer may also affect their own career development. They may not feel confident about looking for promotion or applying for a new job.

Being a carer should not have a negative effect on an employee's future job prospects. It will help if you can reassure them about this. There may also be things you can do to help them feel confident.

We have more information for people who are caring for someone with cancer in our booklet [Working while caring for someone with cancer.](#)



# Talking about cancer

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# Talking to your employee

You might find it difficult to talk to someone who has been diagnosed with cancer. You may want to help, but be unsure what to say.

You may find you have to talk about difficult things with your employee. But it is important to keep communication open. Not talking will make things harder to deal with.

The person who has cancer may also find talking difficult. Everyone reacts differently. Some people find it easy to talk about their thoughts and feelings. But others are more private.

Cultural differences matter too. In some communities, cancer is something people do not think they should talk about (taboo).

Be aware that some people may be embarrassed or not want to talk about the physical details of their cancer.

If your employee is looking after someone with cancer, remember that they may not think of themselves as a carer. They may also not want to talk about their personal life in the workplace.

Talking about cancer might be hard at first, but it can be helpful for everyone. There are things you can do to make your conversations easier.

# First conversations

If your employee wants to tell you they have been diagnosed with cancer or are caring for someone with cancer, encourage them to talk to an HR manager or [occupational health provider](#). Sometimes it can be helpful to involve more than 1 person in the conversation. But your employee should decide who they want to speak with. If your organisation has access to a welfare rights officer, your employee might find it helpful to involve them early on.

Your employee may want to meet with someone other than their line manager. This may be someone they find easy to talk to.

Your employee may also want to have another person with them during conversations about cancer. This may be a colleague, family member, friend or trade union representative. You may want to take notes, but this should be done carefully so that the meeting is kept private (confidential).

Some employees prefer to look for help themselves and read existing policies. They may not tell anyone about the cancer. Others find an informal chat easier.

If they can, let your employee take the lead by telling you what has happened. Let them tell you what support they feel they need from you.

# Be sensitive

Communication is very personal and you will need to think about what you might say to your employee. Remember, everyone is different. What is right for one person might not be helpful for someone else. Think about the individual person and their situation.

## Getting started

Here are some tips to help you prepare for conversations:

- Choose a private place to talk and make sure you will not be interrupted.
- Be prepared for the conversation to overrun. Let your employee set the pace.
- Show you are listening. Use eye contact and encourage conversation by nodding or saying things like, "I see" or "What happened next?".
- Thank the employee for sharing their situation with you.
- Show that it is okay to be upset. Give your employee time to express their emotions and recover, if necessary. Try to stay calm yourself.
- Show empathy with phrases like, "That must be very upsetting".
- Respond to humour but do not start it. Humour can be a helpful coping strategy for people going through a difficult time.
- If your employee becomes too upset to continue, end the meeting. Tell them you can talk again when they are ready.

Try not to:

- be afraid of silence – it is okay if it goes quiet for a bit
- offer advice
- use phrases like, "Things could be worse" or "Things will work out"
- ignore your employee's feelings
- share stories about other people you know who have cancer – this takes the focus away from your employee.

## Keep the conversation going

It is important to keep talking to your employee to make sure they are getting the support they need. Here are some things you can do:

- Ask how they are feeling, both emotionally and physically. Tell them you empathise with their situation.
- Check you understand what the person is saying. If you are unsure what they mean or how they feel, just ask.
- Do not judge or offer advice that has not been asked for. Your role is to offer support and signpost to expert sources.
- Ask if they want colleagues to know and what information should be shared. Respect their feelings and wishes.
- Ask what sort of time off they might need for medical appointments and during treatment. They may not know at this point. It is often a case of seeing how things go.



**“ I had a good relationship with Julia and was happy to act as the intermediary with her and management. This role continued when she returned during treatment. Together, Julia and I put some proposals together for how the school should support Julia, and they were happy to go with the recommendations. ”**

Judy, line manager of Julia who was diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer

## Give them information

It is important that your employee has the right information to help them make decisions about work. But try not to give them too much information straight away, as this might be overwhelming. When they are ready, start sharing helpful information such as the following:

- Tell them the options they have for taking time off.
- Show them organisational policies on reasonable adjustments and coming back to work after sick leave.
- If the person is a carer, they may benefit from understanding the flexible working policy.
- For people with cancer, flexible working should be arranged as a reasonable adjustment.
- Tell them about their rights to be protected against discrimination, either because they have cancer or because they are caring for someone with cancer.
- Give them details of any services your organisation provides to help them. This could be an employee assistance programme that offers counselling.

Make sure you end the meeting by telling your employee that their work is valued. Let them know that they can talk to you at any time if they need your help. Agree how you will keep communication open, and set a date for the next meeting.

Line managers are often in the best position to speak with an employee affected by cancer. It is also important to look after yourself and to get support if you need to.

# How to tell colleagues

It is important to talk to your employee early on about whether they want their colleagues to know. You need to talk about:

- what can and cannot be said
- who will be told
- who will do the telling.

Your employee may not want to tell others they are affected by cancer. This needs to be your employee's decision. You must keep their situation private (confidential) if that is what they want.

If your employee agrees that others should know, ask them:

- if they want to tell people themselves, or who they would like to do it
- if they want to be there when other people find out
- how people should be told, for example one at a time, in a group meeting or by email
- how much information should be shared and what should stay confidential.

When you are talking to colleagues, concentrate on the impact your employee's illness may have on people and projects at work.

Try to:

- stick to the facts
- avoid personal details
- use positive language, but be honest about what to expect
- discuss with your team about how best to talk to their colleague.

You can suggest colleagues speak to you or another manager if they have any concerns about the situation, or if they feel upset. You could also tell them about the Macmillan Support Line, which can provide more support. Our number is **0808 808 00 00** and it is free to call. If your organisation has an employee assistance programme, that could also be a source of support.

**“ My work colleagues cooked me nutritious food, sent me kind text messages and gave me words of comfort and hope which is what helped me get through some dark days. ”**

Shola, diagnosed with thymus cancer

**“ During her treatment, I was constantly talking to Julia, to make sure we had the balance right with her return to work. I worked with the other staff in our department and was able to alter timetables. ”**

Judy, line manager of Julia who was diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer

# Keep in touch

People living with cancer or caring for someone with cancer often feel disconnected from work if they take time off. It is important to keep the right contact with your employee during periods of leave. This contact could be through their manager or a nominated buddy. Be careful how you communicate with the employee. You should aim to make them feel valued, but not feel pressured to come back too soon.

## Check how your employee wants to communicate

If possible, talk to your employee before their time off about keeping in touch with them. Ask them:

- how they want to be contacted, for example face-to-face, phone, email or video call
- how often they want to be contacted
- if there is a good time of day to contact them
- what type of information they would like when you talk
- if they want to receive newsletters and important work emails
- if they want their colleagues to contact them at all.

You should keep reviewing how you keep in touch with your employee, as their needs may change.

## **Keep to arrangements**

Cancer treatment may make it difficult for your employee to be in contact at certain times. This may only become clear after treatment has started. If you have agreed to call or meet with them at a certain time on a certain day, keep that arrangement. Your employee may have made an effort to be able to take the call. But try to be flexible if your employee needs to change the arrangements.

## **If your employee does not want contact with work**

Sometimes an employee may not want any contact with work. Ask them about their reasons for this and reassure them you just want to be supportive. It may simply be because of how they are feeling at that moment. You can ask them about it again later, when they may find the idea of contact with work less worrying.







# Supporting your employee at work

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# Knowing what your employee needs

Many employees choose to share their cancer diagnosis with their employer or manager. Knowing about their diagnosis can help you to make reasonable adjustments. But you do not have a legal right to know the diagnosis or clinical details of an employee's condition. Employees have a right of confidentiality (privacy) under the Human Rights Act 1998.

With your employee's permission you could refer them to an [occupational health service](#). It can help make sure the right support and adjustments are in place. The occupational health service can support your employee and offer advice about how their health may affect their ability to do their job. This could include:

- how long they are likely to be off work for
- how their health issues could affect their return to work
- how long any health issues may affect their ability to do their job
- if there are any adjustments needed in the workplace to help overcome any disadvantages they may have because of health issues
- how long any adjustments are needed for
- the potential impact of health issues on performance or attendance
- the potential impact of health issues on health and safety
- if they could do other roles in your organisation.

You must get the employee's permission before talking to an occupational health service. An employee's health information is private and is protected by the Access to Medical Records Act 1988. If you refer your employee to occupational health, try to keep talking to them about any support they may need from you.

# Options for time off

Some people with cancer are able to keep working while living with cancer. Others need time off during treatment. Time off can be planned or unplanned.

## Sick leave

Find out if your workplace has sick leave policies. Most workplaces should have clear sick leave policies, but small to medium-sized workplaces may not. Sick leave policies are usually part of an employment contract. They should include information about taking time off for appointments.

Cancer is often a long-term and uncertain condition, so flexibility around sick leave policies should be considered. [Reasonable adjustments](#) may also be made. For example, you could allow more time off to go to medical appointments. Or you could adjust sickness absence triggers. This means the level of sick leave that would normally lead to action by an employer.

Your employee may be entitled to company sick pay under their employment contract. This is also called occupational or contractual sick pay. It may be more than the legal minimum, which is called Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). It cannot be less than SSP.

If your workplace allows, you could make reasonable adjustments to your company sick pay policy. This could be to cover extended periods over and above the level of sick pay at an organisation legally or contractually must provide.

SSP is paid after 4 days of sickness and lasts for up to 28 weeks. If SSP is due to end soon, your workplace should provide the employee with an SSP1 form. This gives them information about when the last payment will be. It also tells them about applying for a benefit for people who cannot work because they are ill or disabled. This is called new-style Employment Support Allowance (ESA). For more information about ESA, visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) and search for 'ESA'.

If your employee is likely to be off work for longer than 28 weeks, your workplace can give them the SSP1 form up to 6 weeks before their SSP is due to finish. This means they can start a claim for ESA before their sick pay ends. As a manager, it is a good idea to tell your employee about the SSP1 form before it is sent to them. You should explain to them what the form is and what it means. For more information about the SSP1 for visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) and search for 'SSP1'.

## Fit note

During the first 7 calendar days of sickness, an employee can tell you themselves (self-certify) that they are unable to work. After this time, a healthcare professional such as a cancer doctor, GP, nurse or physiotherapist can issue a fit note. This used to be called a sick note. The fit note will say if someone may be fit or not fit for work, and why. Someone completely fit for work will not be given a fit note.

If the note says that someone may be fit for work, the healthcare professional should include information about how the person's illness affects them. They may also give advice about what could be done to help the person be able to work. The fit note might recommend:

- a gradual (phased) return to work
- flexible working
- amended duties
- workplace adjustments.

The employer and employee should then talk about, and agree, any changes that would help them come back to work.

## **Time off for appointments**

Your employee is likely to need some time off for appointments. They should try to let you know in advance so you can arrange cover if needed. But this may not always be possible.

Some people may need to stay in hospital for treatment. They may also need time off if they are having complementary therapies.

Your sick leave policy should include information on how to deal with time off for medical appointments. But you should try to be as flexible as possible. Allowing time off work for appointments is a reasonable adjustment.

Remember to ask your employee about how they would like to be contacted while they are off work.

## **Time off for carers**

If your employee is a carer, they may be legally entitled to take time off:

- to deal with an emergency
- if something unexpected happens to the person they care for.

It is good practice to support a carer as much as possible.

## Hiring temporary cover

You may need to arrange temporary cover for the employee. This could be because your employee cannot work for a long period of time, or they want to work fewer hours. You should:

- talk about this honestly with your employee
- assure the employee that they continue to be valued
- be clear about your reasons for hiring temporary cover
- listen to their thoughts and concerns
- tell them that the extra help is temporary
- follow your organisation's standard process for employing temporary workers.

The [CIPD](#) has more information about managing absence and other employment issues. Visit [cipd.org/uk/topics/absence-management/](https://cipd.org.uk/topics/absence-management/)

Employers and employees in England, Scotland and Wales can contact the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\)](#) for help on any employment issue. This includes absence management. In Northern Ireland, you can contact the [Labour Relations Agency](#).

**“ Many carers aren't recognised at work and given sufficient, supportive leave arrangements to allow them to carry out the role of carer. There is much to do in terms of working conditions to support the flexible needs of carers. ”**

Patrick, cared for his wife who was diagnosed with bowel cancer



# Making reasonable adjustments

Both the Equality Act (England, Scotland and Wales) and the Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland) say that employers must make reasonable adjustments. These are changes to the workplace or a job that allow your employee to keep working or come back to work.

There is no fixed description of what a reasonable adjustment should be. It will depend on:

- how much the adjustment will help the employee
- how practical it is to make the adjustment
- the cost of making the adjustment
- how the adjustment will affect the company or organisation
- the size of the company or organisation, and the resources it has.

Employers have to make a reasonable adjustment if they know (or should be reasonably expected to know) that an employee has cancer.

You should talk to your employee about possible adjustments. It is important to involve them at every stage. This usually benefits both you and your employee, as the adjustments should allow them to keep working, and make sure they are not disadvantaged.



**“ Teaching in front of a class can be very full-on. Changes were put in place so I could come back to work, but my responsibilities and the type of work I did changed. I mainly did administrative tasks. ”**

Julia, diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer

## Examples of reasonable adjustments

Even 1 or 2 small changes could be enough to help an employee keep working or come back to work. The type of reasonable adjustment you need to make always depends on the situation. It is important to talk about and agree any changes with your employee before they are put in place. Reasonable adjustments could include the following:

- Give your employee time off for medical appointments or for rehabilitation. This may be included in existing policies.
- Change your employee's job description to remove tasks that are particularly difficult because of the cancer or treatment.
- Temporarily give some of the employee's work to a colleague.
- Allow them to work different hours, such as part-time, or with a flexible start or finish time. This can help if your employee has fatigue, as it allows them to work when they have the most energy. It can also mean they do not have to travel at busy times.
- Give them extra breaks if they feel very tired or are coping with fatigue. A short rest in a quiet place can be helpful.
- Change their performance targets to allow for time off or any treatment side effects, such as fatigue.
- If they agree, move them to a job with more suitable tasks for their situation.
- If they use mobility equipment, such as a wheelchair or crutches, make sure they can access the building.
- Give them a parking space closer to the entrance.

- Change where they work – for example, by moving them to a ground floor office if they find it difficult to climb stairs. A professional assessment can help with this – for example, from an occupational health adviser. Make sure you have permission from your employee to talk to [occupational health](#).
- Give them computer equipment that might help – for example, voice-activated software if they cannot type.
- Make sure they can get to the toilet easily by providing an accessible toilet.
- Change the date or time of a meeting or job interview if it was planned at the same time as a medical appointment.
- Give them the option to work from home. Working from home can help your employee save energy. It also means they do not have to travel to work. Make sure their home has a suitable work environment and that they have the right equipment to do the job. It is also important to make sure they stay in contact with colleagues and do not become isolated.
- Allow a phased return to work.

# Occupational health advice

Your employee and your organisation may benefit from the help of an occupational health adviser. This is a health professional, such as a nurse or doctor, who specialises in workplace health issues.

Occupational health advisers offer advice based on their clinical knowledge and an understanding of the tasks and demands of the employee's role. You may want to speak to an occupational health adviser at an early stage. For example, you could contact them before making important changes to or decisions about policies, the workplace or a job description. Make sure you have permission from your employee to talk to an occupational health adviser about their situation.

**“ I got a lot of support from occupational health. When I was ready to come back they reduced my hours. I was going in for a few hours a day, and I wasn't having client contact. They put support in place for me. ”**

Shola, diagnosed with thymus cancer

## How they can help

Occupational health advisers can help you understand your responsibilities under laws about employment, and health and safety. They can also help with business decisions about:

- reasonable adjustments
- fitness to work
- recruitment
- return-to-work plans
- continuing with work
- accessing company benefits, such as counselling or an employee assistance programme.

They can also help managers do risk assessments for employees with cancer or other chronic health problems. This considers the employee's role from a health and safety point of view, to make sure they are doing work that is right for them.

## When you might need workplace occupational health advice

Employers often use occupational health advisers:

- when considering if a job applicant with cancer is well enough to work
- when managers need to support an employee after their diagnosis
- if there is a management concern about an employee's fitness to work after they have been off sick.

### If your workplace does not have an occupational health service

Some companies offer occupational health services to businesses:

- If you are based in England, you can contact [NHS Health at Work](#). This is an occupational health service for small and medium-sized businesses. It charges a fee. Visit [nhshealthatwork.co.uk](https://nhshealthatwork.co.uk)
- If you are based in Wales, you can contact [Healthy Working Wales](#). This scheme offers free occupational health support for employers and individuals. Visit [phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/healthy-working-wales](https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/healthy-working-wales)
- If you are based in Scotland, you can contact [Healthy Working Lives](#). This service offers information on workplace health, safety and well-being. Visit [healthyworkinglives.scot](https://healthyworkinglives.scot)

Macmillan has e-learning for occupational health advisers at [learnzone.org.uk/macprofs/33](https://learnzone.org.uk/macprofs/33) You can also speak to Macmillan's work support advisers on **0808 808 00 00**.

# Access to Work

Access to Work is a government scheme. It offers grants and advice to help employees with a disability or health condition stay in work. You can contact the scheme either as an employer or an employee.

The scheme may pay for:

- special aids and equipment needed in the workplace
- advice about managing your mental health at work
- travel to work if an employee cannot use public transport
- a support worker.

For the scheme in England, Scotland and Wales, you can download an employers' guide. Visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and search 'access to work factsheet'.

In Northern Ireland, visit [nidirect.gov.uk](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk) and search 'access to work'.





# Helping your employee come back to work

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# Joint return-to-work planning

If your employee has been away from work while having treatment or recovering, it can be difficult to know when they are ready to come back.

Many employees do not get medical advice about when to go back to work. They have to make this decision on their own. This is usually based on when they feel it is the right time to return.

Joint return-to-work planning is where both you and your employee talk about and agree the best way forward. Cancer can be unpredictable, so plans should be flexible. They should be regularly reviewed so things can be changed if needed.

[Making reasonable adjustments](#) could be helpful for someone coming back to work. It is important to involve your employee in these conversations, to make sure you make the decisions together.

As well as agreeing a return-to-work plan, it is a good idea to arrange a meeting with your employee. This should be 1 to 2 weeks before their first day back at work.

This meeting gives them a chance to hear important updates and discuss any concerns. It is also a chance for you to find out how they are feeling and prevent any problems. You can check how much they want the team or the rest of the organisation to know about their condition. You can also talk to them about how comfortable they are with people asking them questions.

If you are their manager, you will need to be flexible with your employee's return to work. Their recovery from cancer may be difficult to predict, so the plan may need to change over time. Recovering from cancer is often a long process. Side effects may continue for months or even years.

As part of your joint return-to-work plan, you will need to talk about and finalise any reasonable adjustments you need to make. This will need to include how these will be reviewed over time.



## Phased return to work

An example of a reasonable adjustment you could make is a phased return to work. This is when your employee increases their hours slowly over a period of time.

You and your employee could do this by agreeing a lighter workload. Or they could use some of their annual leave to shorten the working week.

A phased return to work can allow your employee to return to work sooner. It can also allow them to settle back into work at a pace that suits them. This can be a good way to help employees after being off work for a long time.

**“ It took me about an hour to get to my appointments. I was able to get back to teaching classes but my timetable was adjusted so I finished early and could get to these appointments. ”**

Julia, diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer



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# When your employee comes back to work

You can take some of these practical steps to help your employee settle back into work:

- Be there on their first day, or phone them if you cannot be there. Make sure the rest of the team are expecting them. This will make them feel welcomed.
- If you, the employee or the team are working remotely, set up remote social calls and make sure the employee feels welcomed.
- Arrange a catch-up on their first day, to talk about their return-to-work plan and any handovers. This is another chance to check if they are worried about anything.
- Plan and agree regular reviews with your employee. This is to monitor their progress and make sure their workload is manageable. If their workload is not manageable, you can make or change some reasonable adjustments to help them.
- Make sure they are taking breaks and not overworking.
- Consider a health and safety assessment, especially if there has been a change in their job description or working arrangements. If they are working from home, that environment should be assessed too.

- Consider if additional training might be needed if processes or systems have changed since the employee last worked.
- Explain where to find more support if they need it. Suggest they talk to an occupational health or HR manager, if this is possible in your organisation. If there is a confidential counselling service at work, you can tell them about this. Macmillan's work support advisers can also help. Call **0808 808 00 00**.
- Plan for more time off in the future. This may be for medical appointments or because your employee, or the person they care for, is not feeling well. Side effects such as fatigue can continue long after treatment is over.

**“ After I came out of hospital, I had time off work to get myself back together again before returning to work. My employers were happy for me to do phased hours. I did half of my hours to start. ”**

Franko, diagnosed with myeloma



**“ My job was a few hours a day I could forget about cancer. The headteacher just kept saying ‘don’t come in’. At first, I assumed this was meant compassionately, but it really wasn’t what I needed. I was made to feel like I would be a burden on my colleagues. ”**

Saoirse, diagnosed with breast cancer

# Making the return to work easier

These tips can make sure your employee's workload is manageable:

- Make sure your employee does not return to an unmanageable amount of work. Spread the work out so not everything is given to them at once.
- Try to split tasks into smaller steps, to make the job simpler. This can encourage a sense of achievement.
- Prioritise jobs so your employee knows what the most important tasks are. This will give them a greater sense of control and achievement. It will also make sure they meet the needs of the job.
- You could reallocate or change certain tasks. Manage this carefully so other colleagues do not feel overworked. You should also talk about and agree this with your employee. You can reassure them that this is temporary and is not meant to make them feel less valued.
- Adjust performance targets for a short time so they are realistic for your employee. Make sure your employee knows that they are not expected to perform at the level they did before their illness.

# Alternative employment

Suitable alternative employment may be an option if, even with support and reasonable adjustments, your employee is unable to do their job. If the situation is likely to change in the future, this can just be for a short time. You could agree a date with your employee for reviewing the situation later on.

Remember, changes to your employee's working conditions can be for a short time or permanent. These changes may have an impact on their terms of employment, such as hours or pay.

Before any changes are agreed:

- make sure the employee fully understands what the changes mean
- review your organisation's policies to find out what support you can offer them.

Any significant or permanent changes should be confirmed in writing. Your employee should sign this document to show they agree to the change.

# If your employee wants to leave their job

If your employee wants to leave their job (resign), it is important to understand their reasons. There may be something you can do so they want to stay. You could offer extra support and explain all the options. This could help you keep a valued member of staff.

For some people, leaving work is the best option. If this is their decision, make sure you follow your organisation's leaving procedure so that they can leave work in as positive way as possible.

Stopping work because of cancer can have a big impact on someone's finances. Resigning or retiring early can affect the state benefits, pensions and insurance they can get. This is complicated, and every situation is different. Because it is a big financial change, encourage your employee to get expert guidance. It is a good idea for your employee to get advice before any formal action is taken.

You could suggest your employee calls our financial guides on **0808 808 00 00**.



# Bereavement

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# If the cancer cannot be cured

Many people live for months or years after being told the cancer cannot be cured.

Your employee may choose to keep working for as long as possible. In this case, you should make reasonable adjustments and do your best to help the person keep working. For more advice about this, you can call our work support advisers.

If the employee is slowly getting weaker, this can be difficult to manage. An occupational health adviser should be able to help. Colleagues may also find this time upsetting. Tell employees about any counselling or employee assistance programme that is available in your organisation. You can also suggest they call our free support line.

The person with cancer may also need advice about things like their pension or writing a will. You could tell them about Macmillan's financial guides who can help with this. They can call our support line free.

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on  
**0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.



# If your employee dies

Sometimes a cure is not possible and your employee may die from their illness. This can understandably have a big impact on their colleagues and manager. Make sure that well-being support is offered to all those who are affected and could be grieving.

If your employee dies, you will need to take the following steps:

- Tell the employee's colleagues.
- Tell their clients, customers and suppliers. This can prevent embarrassment and upset if they try to contact your employee without knowing what has happened.
- Talk to your employee's family or next of kin. There should be just 1 point of contact. This is usually the line manager or HR manager. Financial issues, such as remaining pay, pensions and insurance, should be sorted out quickly. Make sure any letters or emails you send to the family or next of kin are not addressed to the person who has died.
- Tell their colleagues about funeral arrangements. The wishes of the family or next of kin must be respected in every way. Ask what kind of contact and involvement, if any, they want from people at work.
- Return the employee's belongings to the family or next of kin. This should be done as soon as possible and dealt with sensitively.
- Arrange the return of any equipment or a company car. Again, be sensitive when you do this.

The CIPD has resources on bereavement support. Visit [cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/bereavement-support-line-managers](https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/bereavement-support-line-managers)



# Supporting your team when a colleague has died

Even if the team knew that a colleague's cancer could not be cured, it can be extremely difficult to deal with their death. People will react differently. Some people will need your support, personally as well as professionally. This could be a very tiring time for you. Remember to look after your own needs and know where you can get support too.

You may want to think about ways to remember the person. This could be by setting up a memorial, such as a garden or a plaque.

If anyone at work needs someone to talk to, they can contact us on **0808 808 00 00** for emotional support. They can also contact [Cruse Bereavement Care](#). This is an organisation which provides information and support to anyone who has been bereaved.

You should also tell your team about any counselling service or employee assistance programme that your organisation provides.

# Supporting carers during bereavement

If your employee is caring for someone who is dying, they may start to need more time off. You may need to be flexible about this. When the person they have been caring for dies, they will need time off work to grieve and be with their family or friends. This is sometimes called compassionate leave.

If there are children who were close to the person who died, your employee might need to give them extra support. It may not always be easy to know when they will be needed at home.

They may also need time off work to sort out practical things, such as arranging the funeral and dealing with financial or legal issues.

Some people may want to talk about the person who has died, while others may not. Take guidance from your employee. If you have an employee assistance programme at work, tell them about it. You can also suggest they call the Macmillan Support Line.

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on  
**0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.





# Financial support for employees

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# How changes at work can affect someone's finances

If your employee has been diagnosed with cancer, or is caring for someone with cancer, they may need to make changes to their job. This could be changes to working hours, resigning, or taking early retirement.

Changes to their job can mean:

- they lose some of their income
- their pension changes
- they get pay-outs from insurance policies, including life insurance, mortgage protection insurance, income protection and critical illness cover
- the state benefits they can get change – it could mean they can get more benefits, which would increase their income.

The decisions your employee makes about work can affect what financial help they are able to claim (are eligible for). It may also affect their finances in the future. Before formally agreeing to any changes, make sure your employee has had expert advice about what might happen.

They can call our financial guides on **0808 808 00 00** for more information.

# Financial support from Macmillan

Cancer can have a serious impact on someone's finances. People often lose some of their income, while spending more on things like travelling to hospital.

## Macmillan Support Line

The Macmillan Support Line has specialist advisers who can help with money worries. These include:

- welfare rights advisers, who can help people apply for benefits and other financial support
- financial guides, who can give guidance on personal finance options, such as insurance, pensions, mortgages and financial planning
- energy advisers, who can help people lower their heating and electricity costs
- work support advisers, who can give information about rights at work.

We can also give people information about Macmillan Grants. Macmillan Grants are small, mostly one-off payments to help people with the extra costs cancer can cause. They are for people who have a low level of income and savings. If they need things like extra clothing, or help paying heating bills or travel to their appointments, they may be able to get a Macmillan Grant.

If your employee is worried about debt, we can refer them to [StepChange Debt Charity](#) for advice.

Your employee may also find it useful to read our booklet [Help with the cost of cancer](#), which has information about financial support and benefits.

The Macmillan Support Line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, at **0808 808 00 00**. The opening hours of each service may vary.

You can also find out more about how we can help at [macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport](https://macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport)

## Face-to-face support

Your employee may also be able to talk to a Macmillan welfare rights adviser in person through a local service. Other organisations can also provide support in person, such as Citizens Advice in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) and [Advice NI](#) in Northern Ireland.

## Benefits calculator

Employees can also use the Macmillan benefits calculator to find out which benefits they may be eligible for. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/benefits-calculator](https://macmillan.org.uk/benefits-calculator)

# Other sources of support

Your employee can find out about and apply for state benefits, and get more information about financial support, their rights, employment and living with a disability, at:

- [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) if they live in England, Scotland or Wales
- [nidirect.gov.uk](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk) if they live in Northern Ireland.

If they live in Northern Ireland, they can also call the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 232 1271** or textphone **0289 031 1092** for more information.

Citizens Advice in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) and [Advice NI](#) in Northern Ireland also have more information about benefits.

If your employee is a member of a trade union, it may also be able to offer advice.

Your employee may want to talk to a financial adviser about financial products such as pensions, insurance and investments. These advisers may charge a fee for their services.

[MoneyHelper](https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk) offers free guidance about money and pensions. Visit [moneyhelper.org.uk](https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk)





# Legal rights

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# How people with cancer are protected from discrimination

If a person has, or has ever had cancer, the law considers them to have a disability. This means it is discrimination to treat them less favourably than people who have not had cancer:

- because of the cancer
- for reasons connected to cancer.

There are laws that protect people with cancer from discrimination at work:

- People who live in England, Scotland or Wales are protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- People who live in Northern Ireland are protected by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

These laws do not just protect employees. They also protect people classed as workers, people applying for jobs and, in most cases, people who are self-employed.

The legal protection against discrimination does not end when a person's cancer treatment ends. If they have been diagnosed with cancer in the past, they continue to have legal protection against discrimination. This is the case even if they:

- no longer have cancer
- no longer need treatment
- move to another employer.

Carers are also protected from some types of discrimination.

We have more information about this in our booklets [Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer](#) and [Working while caring for someone with cancer](#).

**“ I didn't know about the Equality Act and I am not sure that management were aware either, but I wanted to do the right thing and support Julia, both personally and professionally. ”**

Judy, line manager of Julia who was diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer

## Which areas of employment are covered by this legislation?

The Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 cover all areas of employment. These include:

- recruitment
- terms and conditions of employment, and any benefits
- opportunities for promotion and training
- ending someone's employment.

## Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the workplace or job that allow an employee to keep working or return to work. If a person is in paid employment and they have or have had cancer, an employer should consider making reasonable adjustments to support them.

The Equality Act and Disability Discrimination Act say that an employer must make reasonable adjustments when the workplace or work practices put an employee at a 'substantial disadvantage' because they have or have had cancer.

Employers have to make a reasonable adjustment if they know (or should reasonably know) that an employee has cancer. For example, if an employee is behaving differently because of cancer, but their employer does not know they have cancer, it would be reasonable for the employer to check whether their behaviour is related to a disability. The employer can then ask how to support them.

We have more information about [reasonable adjustments](#).

# Types of disability discrimination

Employment laws provide protection against different types of disability discrimination. The Equality Act protects people in England, Scotland and Wales. The Disability Discrimination Act protects people in Northern Ireland.

People who live in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland are protected from:

- [direct disability discrimination](#)
- [harassment](#) because of a disability
- [victimisation](#) (with some differences in Northern Ireland)
- failure to make a [reasonable adjustment](#).

People who live in England, Scotland or Wales are also protected from:

- [discrimination arising from disability](#) (DAD)
- [indirect disability discrimination](#).

## Direct disability discrimination

Direct disability discrimination is when someone is treated less favourably than another person because they have a disability. This includes cancer.

This type of discrimination can happen even if someone feels they are trying to help. For example, an employer might say that an employee with cancer would find a promotion too difficult, because of the cancer. So they do not offer the employee a promotion. This is still discrimination. As an employer, you can have a conversation with the employee about the impact of a new job on their health. This way, you can decide together what is best for the employee.

Some problems may happen because of misunderstandings about cancer. Some examples of this are if:

- an employer thinks that a person with cancer cannot do the same job as before
- an employer assumes the employee will be less committed to work because of the cancer
- an employer thinks that the stress of having cancer makes the employee less suitable for promotion
- colleagues think they will need to do extra work to make up for the person with cancer being off sick.

Any of these attitudes towards people with cancer can lead to discrimination at work.

To be direct discrimination, an employer must know, or be reasonably expected to know, that an employee has a disability.

## **Discrimination arising from disability**

Discrimination arising from disability is when someone with a disability such as cancer is treated unfavourably because of something that happens as a result of their disability. This is different to direct disability discrimination, which is discrimination based on the disability itself.

With discrimination arising from disability, an employee does not need to show that someone without a disability would have been treated differently. Instead, they have to show that the unfavourable treatment they have experienced is because of something that happened as a result of the disability.

Direct disability discrimination cannot be considered fair (justified). In some cases, discrimination arising from disability may be considered fair if an employer can show they acted in a way that was reasonably necessary. An employment tribunal would consider the employer's actions to decide if they were justified. For example, it might be justified if the employer's actions were for a genuine business need. Deciding what is justified depends on the case.

Discrimination arising from disability does not apply if the employer can show they did not know, and could not reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability.



## **Indirect disability discrimination**

Indirect disability discrimination is when a rule, policy or practice appears to treat all employees the same, but it actually puts employees with a disability at a disadvantage. This is compared with employees who do not have that disability.

An employer may be able to justify their actions if they can show that there is a genuine business need. For example, they may be justified if the rule, policy or practice is necessary and there is no other option available.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is when someone is bullied or treated in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, humiliated, insulted or intimidated. This includes written or spoken comments. When this behaviour is related to cancer, the employee is protected by law.

## Victimisation

Victimisation is when a person is treated badly because they have done, or intend to do, something that is protected by law. This is called a protected act. Protected acts include:

- making a complaint about discrimination or harassment under the Equality Act or the Disability Discrimination Act
- helping someone else to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

A person does not have to have a disability to claim victimisation. They only have to show that they have done a protected act.

In England, Scotland and Wales, under the Equality Act, a person does not need to show that they have been treated less favourably than someone who has not made a complaint. They only need to show that they were treated badly.

In Northern Ireland, under the Disability Discrimination Act, a person needs to show that they have been treated less favourably than someone who has not made a complaint.

A person is not protected if they do not act honestly and do not believe what they are saying is true. But they will be protected if they give information that is wrong, if they thought it was true at the time.

## Vicarious liability

An employer can be held responsible for how its employees behave during their employment. This is called vicarious liability. An employer could be vicariously liable for acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation by other employees. An employer can still be vicariously liable if they are unaware that the acts are happening.

An employer could also be vicariously liable for harassment that a person experiences from other employees because they are a carer.

**“ I think it’s important to be prepared and find out about legislation that protects you at work. For me, however, my employer was very supportive so I was lucky. ”**

Julia, diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer



# How carers are protected from discrimination

There are laws that protect carers from being discriminated against at work because of their association with a disabled person. If someone has or has had cancer, the law considers this a disability. Being discriminated against because of your association with a disabled person is called associative discrimination.

In England, Scotland and Wales, carers are protected by the Equality Act 2010.

In Northern Ireland, carers are protected by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Carers may be protected against associative discrimination in situations where they have experienced 1 or more of these types of discrimination:

- direct disability discrimination
- harassment
- victimisation
- indirect disability discrimination.

Protection from these types of discrimination may be different in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. If you are not sure if your employee is protected, contact our Work Support Line on **0808 808 00 00** for more advice.

## Direct disability discrimination

This is when a person is treated less favourably than somebody else because they are associated with someone who has cancer or another disability.

Direct disability discrimination includes situations where because someone is a carer for a person with a disability, they are:

- not offered a job
- refused promotion – for example, because an employer is worried they will not be focused on the job
- given worse employment terms – for example, lower pay than their colleagues.

## Harassment

This is when a person is treated in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, insulted or intimidated based on their association with the person with a disability, including cancer. This might include written or spoken comments, or jokes.

## Victimisation

Victimisation is when a person is treated badly because they have done, or intend to do, something that is protected by law. This is called a protected act. Protected acts include:

- making a complaint about discrimination or harassment under the Equality Act or the Disability Discrimination Act
- helping someone else to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

## Indirect disability discrimination

Indirect disability discrimination is when a rule, policy or practice appears to treat all employees the same, but it actually puts some people at a disadvantage. For example, if an employee has worked from home and then an employer makes a rule that everyone has to work from the office. This may put carers at a disadvantage, as it may affect their caring duties if they have to go into an office every day.

An employer may be able to justify their actions if they can show that there is a genuine business need. For example, they may be able to justify the rule, policy or practice if it is necessary and there are no other options available.

## Flexible working and reasonable adjustments

Flexible working could make it easier for carers to keep working while caring for someone. Employees have a legal right to request flexible working under certain laws. This includes people who are carers.

Employers do not have to make reasonable adjustments if the employee does not have a disability. This includes if they are a carer. But other laws may give carers the right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work for caring duties.

## Time off in an emergency

Carers have the legal right to take a reasonable amount of time off work for an emergency that involves the person they care for. They have this right under the following laws:

- The Employment Rights Act 1996, for people who live in England, Scotland or Wales
- The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, for people who live in Northern Ireland.

The person they are caring for is called a dependant. This person could be:

- a parent, child, spouse or civil partner
- anyone who lives with the carer, but is not a tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- someone who relies on the carer to help them if they become ill
- someone who needs the carer to make care arrangements for them.

An emergency might include:

- an unexpected change or problem with care arrangements
- the dependant becoming ill, giving birth, being assaulted or having an accident
- needing to make care arrangements when their dependant is ill or injured – this could mean arranging for a temporary carer, but not taking extra time off to care for the dependant themselves
- the death of a dependant
- having to deal with an unexpected incident that involves their child during school hours.



Carers do not need to have worked for a certain amount of time before they can take time off in an emergency. But an employer can decide how much time off they take based on:

- what has happened
- how close the carer's relationship is to the dependant
- whether someone else could help instead.

Someone who wants to use this type of time off must tell their employer about the emergency as soon as possible. If possible, they should tell their employer when they expect to return to work. The time off is usually unpaid, but this depends on the employer's policy.

A person's legal right to time off in an emergency does not apply if they want to take planned time off to care for someone. For example, it would not apply if they wanted to take a dependant to a medical appointment.

As an employer, you may have a policy for other types of leave for carers. Or you could talk to the person about arranging time off. Some options could be:

- carers' leave (paid or unpaid)
- parental leave
- compassionate leave
- flexible working
- borrowing annual leave from next year or buying additional days
- career breaks and sabbaticals (usually unpaid) – make sure the employee has all the details about these, as they may affect employment rights.

The employer can decide whether to agree to other types of time off.

These options aim to allow your employee to look after their own or their dependant's health while reducing the impact on your organisation. They also protect the employee as much as possible from financial problems.

[Carers UK](#) offers advice on employment issues and rights for carers, including time off.



# Right to request flexible working

Flexible working can help someone with cancer keep working during treatment, or to go back to work after time off. It can also make it easier for carers to keep working while caring for someone.

Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Work and Families (Northern Ireland) Act 2015, all employees have a legal right to request flexible working. This includes carers. This right currently applies if the person has worked for an employer for at least 26 continuous weeks before their request. This legislation is currently in the process of being changed.

Flexible working arrangements could include changes to hours or working from home.

## Requesting flexible working

Employer and employee must follow a process for flexible working requests. To make a flexible working request:

- the employee needs to make their request in writing
- the employee can only make a certain number of requests in a 12-month period
- the employer must consider the request in a fair way
- the employer must decide within a certain time – how long depends on where in the UK the company is based

- if the employer agrees, this will permanently change the employee's contract
- if the employer does not agree, they must write to the employee and explain their reasons – the employee may be able to appeal this decision or complain to an employment or industrial tribunal.

An employee does not have a right to flexible working. They only have a right to ask for it. An employer must consider the request in a fair way. But they can refuse a flexible working if it is not in the best interests of the business. This might be because it would be too expensive or could affect the performance of the business.

You can find free online guides about dealing reasonably with flexible working requests from the:

- [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\)](#)
- [Labour Relations Agency \(LRA\)](#) in Northern Ireland.

# Confidentiality

Everyone who lives in the UK has the right to have their personal information kept private. This includes medical information. This right is protected under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016.

The Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 also says that an employer must ask an employee for their permission to get a medical report on their health from their doctor or other health professional. An employee has the right to:

- ask for and see the report before it is given to an employer
- refuse permission for the employer to see the report.

As an employer, you may want to talk to your employee about whether they want colleagues and clients to be told about their situation. Employers cannot share this information without the consent of the person with cancer.

Employers should take care to protect personal records, including emails and any meeting notes containing details about a person's situation. This type of personal data should only be used with the person's permission.





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# Macmillan resources for employers

Does one of your employees have cancer? Or are they caring for someone with cancer? Supporting them to keep working or come back to work [has many benefits](#) for your employee, your business and other colleagues.

[Macmillan at Work](#) offers training and resources to employers, to enable them to provide better workplace support for employees living with or affected by cancer. You will be able to access:

- masterclass webinars led by expert trainers
- our [Work and cancer toolkit](#), designed to help employers support people affected by cancer.

Our masterclass webinars are for people working in HR and line managers. The main benefits are the following:

- You can choose a masterclass which is suitable for your organisation.
- The webinars are highly interactive and feature real personal stories, small group sessions, whole class discussions, and the chance to ask questions.
- The class sizes are limited to 15 people, to provide a better learning experience.
- You get lifelong access to our excellent e-learning course.

We have more information on our website.  
Visit [macmillan.org.uk/atwork](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/atwork)



# About our information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer. And all our information is free for everyone.

## Order what you need

You may want to order more booklets or leaflets like this one.

Visit [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

We have booklets about different cancer types, treatments and side effects. We also have information about work, financial issues, diet, life after cancer treatment and information for carers, family and friends.

## Online information

All our information is also available online at [macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support](http://macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support) You can also find videos featuring stories from people affected by cancer, and information from health and social care professionals.

## Other formats

We also provide information in different languages and formats, including:

- audiobooks
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- easy read booklets
- interactive PDFs
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](http://macmillan.org.uk/otherformats)

If you would like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at [cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk) or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

## The language we use

We want everyone affected by cancer to feel our information is written for them.

We want our information to be as clear as possible. To do this, we try to:

- use plain English
- explain medical words
- use short sentences
- use illustrations to explain text
- structure the information clearly
- make sure important points are clear.

We use gender-inclusive language and talk to our readers as 'you' so that everyone feels included. Where clinically necessary we use the terms 'men' and 'women' or 'male' and 'female'. For example, we do so when talking about parts of the body or mentioning statistics or research about who is affected.

To find out more about how we produce our information, visit [macmillan.org.uk/ourinfo](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/ourinfo)



# Other ways we can help

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we are here to support you.

## Talk to us

If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, talking about how you feel and sharing your concerns can really help.

### Macmillan Support Line

Our free, confidential phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. We can:

- help with any medical questions you have about cancer or your treatment
- help you access benefits and give you financial guidance
- be there to listen if you need someone to talk to
- tell you about services that can help you in your area.

Our trained cancer information advisers can listen and signpost you to further support. Call us on **0808 808 00 00**. We are open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.

You can also email us, or use the Macmillan Chat Service via our website. You can use the chat service to ask our advisers about anything that is worrying you. Tell them what you would like to talk about so they can direct your chat to the right person. Click on the 'Chat to us' button, which appears on pages across the website. Or go to [macmillan.org.uk/talktous](https://macmillan.org.uk/talktous)

If you would like to talk to someone in a language other than English, we also offer an interpreter service for our Macmillan Support Line. Call **0808 808 00 00** and say, in English, the language you want to use. Or send us a web chat message saying you would like an interpreter. Let us know the language you need and we'll arrange for an interpreter to contact you.

## **Macmillan Information and Support centres**

Macmillan information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. Visit one to get the information you need and speak with someone face to face. If you would like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone confidentially.

Find your nearest centre at [macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres](https://macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres) or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

## **Help with money worries**

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you have been affected in this way, we can help. Please note the opening times may vary by service.

### **Financial guidance**

Our financial team can give you guidance on mortgages, pensions, insurance, borrowing and savings.

### **Help accessing benefits**

Our welfare rights advisers can help you find out what benefits you might be entitled to, and help you complete forms and apply for benefits. They can also tell you more about other financial help that may be available to you. We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport](https://macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport) to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.

## Help with energy costs

Our energy advisers can help if you have difficulty paying your energy bills (gas, electricity and water). They can help you get access to schemes and charity grants to help with bills, advise you on boiler schemes and help you deal with water companies.

## Macmillan Grants

Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing, to changes needed to your home.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** to find out more about Macmillan Grants.

## Help with work and cancer

Whether you are an employee, a carer, an employer or are self-employed, we can provide support and information to help you manage cancer at work. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/work](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)

## Work support

Our dedicated team of work support advisers can help you understand your rights at work. Call us on **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a work support adviser.

## Talk to others

No one knows more about the impact cancer can have on your life than those who have been through it themselves. That is why we help bring people together in their communities and online.

### Support groups

Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, family member or friend, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face to face with people who understand. Find out about support groups in your area by calling us or by visiting [macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport](https://macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport)

### Online Community

Thousands of people use our Online Community to make friends, blog about their experiences and join groups to meet other people going through the same things. You can access it any time of day or night. Share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://macmillan.org.uk/community)

You can also use our Ask an Expert service on the Online Community. You can ask a financial guide, cancer information nurse, work support advisor or an information and support advisor any questions you have.

## Macmillan healthcare professionals

Our nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals give expert care and support to individuals and their families. Call us or ask your GP, consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals near you.



# Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support. Details correct at time of printing.

## Work support

### Access to Work

Tel **0800 121 7479**

Textphone **0800 121 7579**

[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

Provides advice to people with long-term health conditions and their employers. Gives grants to pay for practical support to help you do your job.

### Access to Work (NI)

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work)

Gives support and advice to employees with disabilities and their employers. To apply for assistance through this programme, speak to an adviser at your local Jobs and Benefits Office.

### Advice NI

Helpline **0800 915 4604**

Provides advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, housing and employment issues.

### **Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)**

Helpline **0300 123 1100**

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Gives advice to employees and employers to help improve working life and relations. Offers information, advice and training.

### **Business Disability Forum**

Tel **0207 403 3020**

[www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](http://www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk)

Provides advice and support to make it easier for businesses to employ disabled people and welcome disabled customers.

### **CIPD**

Tel **0208 612 6200**

[www.cipd.org.uk](http://www.cipd.org.uk)

Supports employers and organisations to improve their HR and development practices, to achieve a better working life.

### **Citizens Advice**

Provides advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, housing and employment issues. Use its online webchat or find details for your local office by contacting:

### **England**

Helpline **0800 144 8848**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Scotland

Helpline **0800 028 1456**

[www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

## Wales

Helpline **0800 702 2020**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales)

## Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)

Tel **0808 800 0082**

Textphone **0808 800 0084**

[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

Promotes equality and provides information to people about their rights in England, Scotland and Wales.

## Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)

Tel **0289 050 0600**

[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

Aims to promote equality of opportunity, encourage good relations and challenge discrimination.

## Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

Tel **0116 350 0700**

[www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk)

Supports health and safety professionals with training and resources to help create workplaces that are safer, healthier and more sustainable.

## **Labour Relations Agency (LRA)**

[www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)

Tel **0330 055 2220**

Responsible for promoting the improvement of employment relations in Northern Ireland. Provides advice and support to both employees and employers, and helps resolve disputes.

## **StepChange Debt Charity**

Tel **0800 138 1111**

[www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)

Provides free debt advice through phone, email, the website and online through live chats with advisers.

## **Working With Cancer**

[www.workingwithcancer.co.uk](http://www.workingwithcancer.co.uk)

Provides coaching, advice and support to people with cancer and carers. Employers can purchase this service to help employees return to or remain in work.

## **WorkSmart**

[www.worksmart.org.uk](http://www.worksmart.org.uk)

Provides information on employment rights, health at work and financial matters. It is part of the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

## **Financial support or legal advice and information**

### **GOV.UK**

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Has information about social security benefits and public services in England, Scotland and Wales.

### **MoneyHelper**

Tel **0800 011 3797**

[www.moneyhelper.org.uk](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk)

A government service giving free and impartial money advice.

### **NI Direct**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

Has information about benefits and public services in Northern Ireland.

## **General health information**

### **NHS Health at Work**

[www.nhshealthatwork.co.uk](http://www.nhshealthatwork.co.uk)

NHS Health at Work is an occupational health service for small and medium-sized businesses in England.

### **Healthy Working Lives**

[www.healthyworkinglives.scot](http://www.healthyworkinglives.scot)

Offers information on workplace health, safety and well-being in Scotland.

## **Healthy Working Wales**

[www.phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/healthy-working-wales](http://www.phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/healthy-working-wales)

Offers free occupational health support for employers and individuals in Wales.

## **General cancer support organisations**

### **Black Women Rising**

[www.blackwomenrisinguk.org](http://www.blackwomenrisinguk.org)

Aims to educate, inspire and bring opportunities for women from the BAME community. Shares stories and supports Black cancer patients and survivors through treatment and remission.

### **Cancer Black Care**

Tel **0208 961 4151**

[www.cancerblackcare.org.uk](http://www.cancerblackcare.org.uk)

Offers UK-wide information and support for people from Black and minority ethnic communities who have cancer. Also supports their friends, carers and families.

### **Cancer Focus Northern Ireland**

Helpline **0800 783 3339**

[www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org)

Offers a variety of services to people affected by cancer in Northern Ireland.

### **Cancer Research UK**

Helpline **0808 800 4040**

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

A UK-wide organisation that has patient information on all types of cancer. Also has a clinical trials database.

### **Cancer Support Scotland**

Tel **0800 652 4531**

[www.cancersupportscotland.org](http://www.cancersupportscotland.org)

Runs cancer support groups throughout Scotland. Also offers free complementary therapies and counselling to anyone affected by cancer.

### **Macmillan Cancer Voices**

[www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices)

A UK-wide network that enables people who have or have had cancer, and those close to them such as family and carers, to speak out about their experience of cancer.

### **Maggie's**

Tel **0300 123 1801**

[www.maggies.org](http://www.maggies.org)

Has a network of centres in many locations throughout the UK. Provides free information about cancer and financial benefits. Also offers emotional and social support to people with cancer, their family, and friends.

## **Support for carers**

### **Carers UK**

Helpline **0808 808 7777**

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Offers information and support to carers across the UK. Has an online forum and can put people in contact with local support groups for carers.

## **Bereavement support**

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Helpline **0808 808 1677**

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Provides bereavement support to anyone who needs it across the UK. You can find your local branch on the website.

## **LGBT-specific support**

### **LGBT Foundation**

Tel **0345 330 3030**

[www.lgbt.foundation](http://www.lgbt.foundation)

Provides a range of services to the LGBT community, including a helpline, email advice and counselling. The website has information on various topics including sexual health, relationships, mental health, community groups and events.





## Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up to date but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it. Some photos are of models.

## Thanks

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by Chief Medical Editor Prof Tim Iveson, Consultant Medical Oncologist, and Liz Egan, formerly with the Macmillan Work and Cancer Team.

With thanks to: : Louise Bain, Senior Solicitor, The Glasgow Law Practice; Joanne Conroy, Human Resource Representative, Macmillan Cancer Support; Louise Dinsdale, Senior Knowledge Specialist, Macmillan Cancer Support; Emma Gooding-Brown, Work Support Adviser, Macmillan Cancer Support; Polly Guest, Work Support Adviser, Macmillan Cancer Support; Holly Ivins, Reference Content Manager, CIPD; Karin Macdonald, Welfare Rights/Grants Team Leader, Macmillan Cancer Support; Martin McKiernan, Solicitor, Carson McDowell; Fiona McLellan, Partner, Hill Dickinson LLP; Ross Milvenan, Solicitor, Head of Litigation, Just Employment Law; Orlagh O'Neill, Solicitor, Carson McDowell; Stacey Powell, Work Support Adviser, Macmillan Cancer Support; and Rachel Suff, Senior Policy Adviser, CIPD.

Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

We welcome feedback on our information. If you have any, please contact **[cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)**

## Sources

Below is a sample of the sources used in our work support information. If you would like more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk**

Citizens Advice [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) [accessed May 2022].

GOV.UK [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) [accessed May 2022].

NI Direct [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) [accessed May 2022].

## Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It is just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer. They are produced by our cancer information specialists who, along with our nurses, benefits advisers, campaigners and volunteers, are part of the Macmillan team. When people are facing the toughest fight of their lives, we are here to support them every step of the way.

We want to make sure no one has to go through cancer alone, so we need more people to help us. When the time is right for you, here are some ways in which you can become a part of our team.

### 5 ways you can help someone with cancer

#### 1. **Share your cancer experience**

Support people living with cancer by telling your story, online, in the media or face to face.

#### 2. **Campaign for change**

We need your help to make sure everyone gets the right support. Take an action, big or small, for better cancer care.

#### 3. **Help someone in your community**

A lift to an appointment. Help with the shopping. Or just a cup of tea and a chat. Could you lend a hand?

#### 4. **Raise money**

Whatever you like doing you can raise money to help. Take part in one of our events or create your own.

#### 5. **Give money**

Big or small, every penny helps. To make a one-off donation see over.

## Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other

Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Please accept my gift of £  
(Please delete as appropriate)

I enclose a cheque / postal order /  
Charity Voucher made payable to  
Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:

Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity  
Card / Switch / Maestro

Card number

Valid from

Expiry date

Issue no

Security number

Signature

Date / /

## Do not let the taxman keep your money

Do you pay tax? If so, your gift will be worth 25% more to us – at no extra cost to you. All you have to do is tick the box below, and the tax office will give 25p for every pound you give.

I am a UK tax payer and I would like Macmillan Cancer Support to treat all donations I make or have made to Macmillan Cancer Support in the last 4 years as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand Macmillan Cancer Support will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Macmillan Cancer Support and our trading companies would like to hold your details in order to contact you about our fundraising, campaigning and services for people affected by cancer. If you would prefer us not to use your details in this way please tick this box.

In order to carry out our work we may need to pass your details to agents or partners who act on our behalf.

If you would rather donate online go to [macmillan.org.uk/donate](http://macmillan.org.uk/donate)



Please cut out this form and return it in an envelope (no stamp required) to: Supporter Donations, Macmillan Cancer Support, FREEPOST LON15851, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

## This booklet is for managers, HR professionals and employers. It is about how you can support people affected by cancer in your workplace.

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This booklet suggests practical things you can do and explains your responsibilities as an employer. It helps you understand your employee's experience, whether they have cancer or are looking after someone with cancer.

At Macmillan, we give people with cancer everything we've got. If you are diagnosed, your worries are our worries. We will help you live life as fully as you can.

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call **0808 808 00 00** or visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Would you prefer to speak to us in another language? Interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use. Are you deaf or hard of hearing? Call us using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app.

Need information in different languages or formats? We produce information in audio, interactive PDFs, easy read, Braille, large print and translations.

To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call our support line.

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