























Work and cancer FAQs

We use the terms 'manager' and 'employer' in our information, but different people at your workplace may be involved. Many services may be able to help. The services we mention include:

















- **Cancer team** – this is the cancer team at the hospital. It may include oncologists, radiologists and cancer nurses. In some services, it may also include a social worker.
- **GP services** – this is your doctor's surgery.
- **Occupational health professionals** – these may include workplace health and safety advisers, nurses, physiotherapists, counsellors and GPs. They may not be available at every workplace. Your work may offer an external occupational health service. You can learn more from your employer or HR manager.
- **Line manager** – this is who you directly report to at work.
- **HR manager** – this is someone in the human resources or recruitment team at your work.
- **Advisory services** – these are organisations that offer guidance, including helping resolve work disputes.
- **Charities and support groups** – these may include a Macmillan work support adviser, other cancer support charities, carer organisations, local support groups and online forums.
- **Unions** – these are trade or labour unions you may be a member of.

If you are unsure who to ask, you can call our support line on **0808 808 00 00**. They may be able to answer your question or tell you who would be best placed to answer it.

Money

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
If I cannot work, what Statutory Sick Pay or company sick pay might I be able to get?								
How do I get benefits? Are there any benefits that I might be able to get? Could I apply for Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Personal Independence Payment?								
If I cannot work, will the benefits I get at the moment be affected?								
How long can I claim benefits for?								
If I cannot work, which insurance and payment protection policies can I use?								
If I am off work for a long time, could this affect my life insurance cover? For example, would it affect my death-in-service benefit?								


Work

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
What policies does my employer have that apply to my situation? Where do I find information about them? For example, are there policies about absence management, occupational health, sick pay or employer pension schemes?								
Do I need to take sick leave or use annual leave for treatment or appointments?								
When can my sick pay be confirmed?								
If I take time off work, what do I need to do to make sure my job is secure?								
If I cannot go back to work, can I take ill-health retirement?								





























Questions about preparing to go back to work

These are questions you may have about preparing to return to work after time off. You might still be having treatment. Or you might have finished your treatment.

 A tick in a circle shows the service or person most likely able to answer your question.

 A simple tick shows a service or person who may also be able to help.

Health

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
Are there any treatment side effects that could cause me problems with work? When might these side effects happen and how long could they last?								
How might treatment affect my ability to do physical tasks and mental tasks at work? For example, will I be able to drive, climb ladders or concentrate for long periods of time?								
What could I do to manage any problems I have at work with mental tasks? For example, what could help with difficulty concentrating?								
What could help me cope with side effects at work?								
Where can I get help if I am worried or anxious about going back to work?								

Money

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
If I go back to work or my work situation changes, what impact will that have on my pay and benefits? For example, how would working fewer hours affect my pay and benefits?				✓	✓	✓		✓

Work

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
Where can I find out my legal rights about cancer and work?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Do I need to give my employer any notice before coming back to work?			✓	✓	✓			
Can I go back to work slowly after taking extended sick leave (a phased return)?		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
How can I make sure I am told about changes that have happened at work while I have been on sick leave? For example, how will I know if there have been changes to technology, team members, targets, policies or the client base?				✓	✓			✓


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	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
How can I make sure the relevant people are involved in my return to work? For example, how can I involve my line manager, GP or cancer team, HR manager and occupational health professionals?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Can we agree on what to tell other people at work about the cancer and how it will affect my work? For example, what will we tell colleagues, managers and clients?			✓	✓	✓			
How can we make sure that my physical work environment is comfortable? For example, can we talk about things like temperature, cleanliness, uniform or the location of toilets?			✓	✓	✓			
How can we change my job so that I spend less time on tasks that are difficult for me? For example, what are the options if I need to do less driving or shift work, or work on tasks that do not need me to concentrate for long periods?			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
How can we work together to agree on any changes to my job and job description?			✓	✓	✓			✓
Can I have flexible working when I need to, to help me manage treatment side effects? For example, if I am feeling fatigued, could I work fewer hours or flexible hours, or work from home?			✓	✓	✓			✓
If I find it difficult to cope when I am back at work, where can I get support?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Can we have regular meetings to review my working arrangements?				✓	✓			










Questions about going back to work

These are questions you may have about going back to work during or after treatment.






 A tick in a circle shows the service or person most likely able to answer your question.

 A simple tick shows a service or person who may also be able to help.
























Health

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
How many follow-up appointments might I need after treatment? How much flexibility is there about when and where I have my appointments? For example, can I have them outside of working hours?								
I am not very confident about going back to work. I am worried about my cancer coming back. What support can I get?								

Money



	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
Can I have paid time off to go to follow-up appointments?								
Which benefits can I keep getting when I go back to work?								

Work











	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
Can we talk about any temporary changes to my work that I might need?								
How can we make sure I am not at risk of infection at work? For example, is it possible for me to avoid close contact with colleagues, or work from home when I am most likely to get an infection?								
Can I have regular breaks to help me manage side effects? For example, breaks can help me cope with fatigue, pain or changes to my diet.								
What effect might the cancer have on my career progression?								
Can we have regular meetings to review my working arrangements?								
What might changes to my working arrangements mean for my pension when I retire?								

Questions if you do not go back to work

These are questions you may have if you cannot go back to work or have decided to stop working because of the cancer.

-  A tick in a circle shows the service or person most likely able to answer your question.
-  A simple tick shows a service or person who may also be able to help.

Health

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
How can I make sure I stay physically active when I am not working?								
I am worried about feeling lonely if I am not working. Where can I get support?								
How can I look after my mental health when I am not working?								

Money

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
I cannot go back to work. Are there any benefits that I might be able to get?					✓	✓	✓	✓
I am retiring. Where can I get information about my finances and pension?					✓	✓	✓	✓
Changes in my health may stop me going back to work. Could I take ill-health early retirement?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Work

	Cancer team	GP services	Occupational health professionals	Line manager	HR manager	Advisory services	Charities and support groups	Unions
I left my job because of the cancer. Where can I get advice about changing careers?						✓	✓	✓
Where can I get legal advice on telling my new employer about the cancer?						✓	✓	✓
What is my current or previous employer allowed to say about the cancer when a future employer asks for a reference?					✓	✓	✓	✓