Work and cancer series – for people living with cancer

WORK AND CANCER
The Macmillan work and cancer series

Macmillan produces a range of information about work and cancer:

For people living with cancer

• Questions to ask about work and cancer
• Work and cancer

For people looking after someone with cancer

• Questions for carers to ask about work and cancer
• Working while caring for someone with cancer

For employers

• 10 top tips for line managers
• Managing cancer in the workplace
• Cancer in the workplace videos

All of the above titles are included in The essential work and cancer toolkit, a pack to help employers support their employees.

Further information
The following titles are also available:

• Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer
• Self-employment and cancer

To order any of this information, visit be.macmillan.org.uk/work
Alternatively, visit macmillan.org.uk/work
About this booklet

This booklet explains how cancer and its treatments can affect your work life. It gives advice on managing work and cancer.

If you are self-employed, we have a separate booklet called Self-employment and cancer. It’s also for people who run a business that employs fewer than 10 people.

Being diagnosed with cancer is one of the most difficult situations anyone has to face. It can affect all areas of your life, including work.

About 750,000 people are working with cancer in the UK. These numbers are increasing as more people with cancer are cured or living with cancer for longer.

Some people carry on working during treatment. After treatment, most people want to go back to work when they feel ready and able. It can give you a sense of purpose and make you feel better about yourself. Going back to work may be challenging but it can also help with your recovery.

This booklet also has information to make you more aware of your rights at work. We have also included details of organisations that can help you.

In this booklet, we’ve included quotes from people affected by cancer. Some are from Julia, who is on the cover of this booklet, and some are from people who’ve chosen to share their story with us. To share your story, visit macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory Others are from the website healthtalk.org
If you’d like to discuss this information, call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm. If you’re hard of hearing, you can use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay. For non-English speakers, interpreters are available. Alternatively, visit macmillan.org.uk

Turn to pages 83–88 for some useful addresses and websites, and to page 89 to write down questions for your doctor or nurse.

If you find this booklet helpful, you could pass it on to your employer, colleagues, family and friends. They may also want information to help them support you.

Because the benefits system is changing significantly over the next few years, please visit macmillan.org.uk Or you can call us on 0808 808 00 00 to find out more. Information about benefits in this booklet applies from April 2016 to April 2017.

**Your data and the cancer registry**

When you are diagnosed with cancer in the UK, some information about you and your health is collected in a cancer registry. This is used to plan and improve health and care services. Your hospital will usually give this information to the registry automatically. There are strict rules to make sure the information is kept safely and securely. It will only be used for your direct care or for health and social care planning and research.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions. If you do not want your information included in the registry, you can contact the cancer registry in your country. You can find more information at macmillan.org.uk/cancerregistry
Contents

Cancer and your work life
During your treatment
Working after treatment
Not returning to work
Further information

5
21
51
71
77
'Returning to work helped me feel that life was carrying on as normal despite cancer.'

Julia, diagnosed with ovarian and womb cancer in 2011
CANCER AND YOUR WORK LIFE

How cancer may affect your work life 6
Treatments and side effects 8
Making decisions about work 13
Your feelings 18
How cancer may affect your work life

Cancer can cause uncertainties that are hard to cope with in different areas of your life. One of these may be your work life. You may not know how it will affect work in the short term or in the future.

If you can, it’s a good idea to contact your manager or human resources (HR or personnel) department early on. You can talk to them about the possible effects of your illness on your work. If your manager knows about the possible effects of the cancer or treatment on your ability to work, they can support you better. If your workplace has an occupational health adviser (see page 33) you could ask your manager to refer you to them. They keep everything confidential if you ask them to.

Some people stop working during treatment and for a while after until they feel ready to go back. Others carry on working, perhaps with reduced hours or changes to their job. Working may give you a sense of normality and routine or may be essential for your finances. Your work may also be an important place for friendships and social life.

After treatment (see pages 52–69), going back to work may help you to feel you’re getting back to normal. Some people may decide not to go back to work. Or they may choose to do something different. Some others may not be able to go back to work because of the effects of cancer on their health.
How cancer affects your work life will depend on different things, such as:

- the type of cancer and its stage (if it has spread)
- your treatment and its side effects
- your finances
- the practical support you have.

You will need time off work to have tests, appointments and treatments. You may also need time to cope with and adjust to your feelings. It can be difficult to concentrate and manage your work when you feel anxious, shocked or upset.

Some people work around their treatment. Others may need more rest or feel too unwell to work.

Knowing more about treatment and its possible side effects can help you make decisions about your work life. Your doctor may tell you what your limits are with work. With some treatments, you may not know what to expect until you start.

Even then, things may change during and after treatment. You may become more tired or have other side effects that are harder to cope with. Because of this, your ability to work may change.

People can carry on working or return to work with support from their employer. The law (see pages 22–23) says your employer has to consider making reasonable adjustments (changes) to help you. There may be different people at your workplace who can give you advice (see page 23). There are also different organisations (see pages 83–88) that can help.
Treatments and side effects

Knowing more about the cancer and its treatments can help you understand the possible effects on your work life. Your cancer doctor or nurse will give you more information. The main treatments are surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and targeted therapies. You may have a combination of treatments.

You can talk to your manager (see pages 22–25) about the side effects of your treatment. They can then look at reasonable adjustments to help make things easier for you at work. Treatment side effects may change over time. For example, you may become more tired. Let your manager know how you are feeling so they can review things.

Surgery

The effects depend on the type of operation you have. If you have day surgery, you may only need a short time off work. But you may need radiotherapy or chemotherapy afterwards. This can have more effect on your ability to work.

A bigger operation means having more time off work to adjust and recover. After certain operations some people may need therapies to help, for example physiotherapy or speech therapy.

If surgery affects how a part of your body works, it may prevent you doing certain parts of your job.
Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy uses high-energy x-rays to destroy cancer cells. You usually have it Monday to Friday as an outpatient. It can take up to several weeks depending on your course of treatment.

Treatment itself only takes a few minutes. But travelling to and from the hospital and waiting can take up a large part of the day.

Some people feel able to work during radiotherapy but may need to reduce their hours. The radiographers (who give the radiotherapy) may be able to time your treatment for before or after your work hours. Other people stop working completely during radiotherapy and for a few weeks afterwards.

Side effects

Radiotherapy can make you very tired. This can continue for weeks or months after treatment is over. Other side effects depend on the part of your body that’s being treated. Most last for a few weeks after treatment and then gradually improve.

‘For five weeks I had treatment every day from Monday to Friday. My timetable was adjusted so I finished early and could get to these appointments.’

Julia
Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy uses anti-cancer (cytotoxic) drugs to destroy cancer cells. You usually have chemotherapy as an outpatient. It is given by injection into a vein (intravenously) or as tablets. Some people may need to go into hospital for a few days.

You usually have a break of a few weeks in between treatments to allow your body to recover. Some people can’t work because they’re too unwell. Others may take a few days off after each treatment and work reduced hours.

Side effects
These can include:

• risk of infection or risk of bleeding (because of the effects on your blood cells)
• tiredness
• hair loss
• feeling sick
• diarrhoea.

If you feel able to work, there are precautions you may need to take to reduce your risk of infection. See page 41 for details.

‘I took the opportunity to work in my own office and stayed away from folks who clearly had a cold. Then during the few days after chemo where I felt sick or rough, I worked from home.’

Ryan
Hormonal therapies

Hormonal therapies reduce the level of certain hormones or block their effects on the cancer cells. You usually have these drugs for months or years as tablets. Some are given as injections every few weeks or months.

Side effects of hormonal therapies
Hormonal therapies usually have less of an effect on your ability to work. They can cause tiredness, weight gain, hot flushes, sweats and muscle pain.

Targeted therapies

These drugs interfere with the way cancer cells grow. They often have less troublesome side effects than chemotherapy. You can have them as a drip (intravenous infusion) or as tablets. They are often given along with other treatments.

Side effects
Possible side effects include flu-like symptoms, chills, headaches, a raised temperature, lowered resistance to infection, and tiredness.

You may be able to carry on working if you are having a targeted therapy on its own. But tiredness and other side effects may sometimes make it difficult.

We have information about different cancer types, treatments and their side effects. Call our cancer support specialists on 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk
There are different things you may need to think about when making decisions about work. The most important one is usually how your treatment will affect you. But your finances may also be an important factor.

You need to know how your treatment is likely to affect your ability to work. Your cancer doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals will give you information and tell you what to expect. Let them know what your job involves so you can talk about any particular difficulties.

You may also need to talk things over with a partner, if you have one, your family or close friends.
Questions you may want to ask your healthcare team

- How long will each treatment take?
- Will I need to stay in hospital and, if so, for how long?
- How do people typically feel during and after treatment?
- Will I need time off to recover?
- How can the side effects be reduced?
- Will treatment affect any physical demands of my job?
- Will I be able to concentrate, drive, work shifts or travel?
- Is there another treatment that works as well but could interfere less with work life?
- Are there any options that could make working easier? For example, could I have my treatment at a hospital closer to my work?

Sometimes two different treatments work equally well. Your doctor may ask you to choose between them. If one interferes less with your work life, this may help you decide.

We have a booklet called *Making treatment decisions* that you may find helpful.

It can be difficult to predict how treatment will affect you. Two people having the same treatment can have different reactions. You may not be able to make a decision about work until after your first treatment.
Questions to ask yourself

Here are some questions you may want to ask yourself before you make a decision:

• Are there any risks to carrying on working during treatment?
• Will I need to cut back on my workload temporarily?
• Should I think about working in a different way, to allow time for rest as well as my treatment?
• Who can help me at work in practical ways?
• Will I need extra financial help and where can I get it?

Finances

When you are making decisions about work, your finances may be an important thing to think about. Our booklet Help with the cost of cancer has information about financial help and benefits.

Contact our financial guides as soon as possible if you’re worried about money (see pages 45–49). There may also be a social worker or welfare rights adviser at the hospital who can advise you.

Worries about money and work are common for people who have been diagnosed with cancer. But they may seem especially tough if you’re self-employed. We have more information in our booklet Self-employment and cancer. It is also written for people who run a micro-business (one that employs fewer than 10 people).

To order a free copy of our booklets, visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call 0808 808 00 00.
Help from others

How much help and support you have from other people may influence your decision about work. Think about the practical help you can get from friends or family. This could give you more time to rest or more energy to cope with work. If you have a partner, you can talk about how you can jointly manage things.

You could ask for help with household chores, shopping and preparing meals. If you have children, ask someone you trust to help take them to and from school or activities.

If you need support with childcare, we have more information about this. You may find it helpful to talk to someone at the hospital, such as a social worker, for advice.

‘What struck me – and I hadn’t been prepared for – was just how much energy it drained from me. It was three months before I felt able to get back to work.’

Tim
Your decision

What you decide will depend on your individual circumstances and what you feel is right for you. You can also change your mind as treatment goes on or if your circumstances change.

Some people decide to take time off until treatment is finished and they feel ready to return to work (see pages 52–59). You may decide you want to focus on getting through your treatment and recovering. Others may carry on working, either full-time or part-time during treatment.

If you are in a senior or management position, you may feel under pressure to carry on working or go back before you feel ready. This can be difficult. Talk about your concerns and options with your HR advisor, medical team or family and friends to help you decide. You can also contact Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00.

Some people find their experience of cancer makes them rethink what they want to do with their lives. They may decide to give up work entirely or to do a completely different job (see pages 67–75).

If you decide to work during treatment, your employer should try to help and support you. You can talk to them about reasonable adjustments (changes) they may be able to make to help you carry on working (see pages 31–33).
Your feelings

Living with cancer during or after treatment may change the way you feel about work. You may have particular feelings about the way cancer affects your work life.

You may feel:

• you have lost the normality and independence work gives you
• angry you can’t be at work as usual
• worried about your colleagues’ reactions
• guilty if others are taking on some of your work
• frustrated because things you found easy are now more difficult
• less confident in your ability to do your job well
• out of touch with your work colleagues.

All this can be hard to cope with. But with support you can find ways to adapt and to have more sense of control. It may take time to build your confidence and self-esteem.
Getting support

Talking about how you feel to family and close friends can often help. You can also talk to your cancer doctor, nurse or GP, or a professional counsellor. Counselling may help you to cope with your feelings and deal with any difficulties, such as talking to colleagues about cancer. If you’ve lost your confidence, it can help you to look at ways to build it up again.

Some companies and organisations have an employee assistance programme (EAP) to help employees coping with personal issues. Some cancer centres or GP surgeries provide counselling.

We have a booklet called How are you feeling? The emotional effects of cancer, which discusses the different feelings you may have and what can help. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00 to order a free copy.
DURING YOUR TREATMENT

- Talking to your employer 22
- How your employer can support you 29
- Talking to other people at work 36
- Coping with side effects or symptoms 39
- Your finances 45
Talking to your employer

Many people find that their employers are supportive. But some people worry about telling their employer they have cancer and need treatment. They may be concerned that their employer won’t support them, or will sack them or find an excuse to make them redundant. This should not happen. There are laws that protect your rights at work when you have been diagnosed with cancer.

Cancer and the law

If you have or have had cancer, the law considers you to be disabled. This means you can’t be treated less favourably than other people at work because of the cancer. If you are treated less favourably because of the cancer, it is called discrimination (see pages 61–66).

The following legislation protects you:

• the **Equality Act 2010**, if you live in England, Scotland or Wales
• the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)**, if you live in Northern Ireland.

This legislation also says your employer has to make reasonable adjustments (changes) to your workplace and their work practices. They are required to do this when the workplace or their working practices mean you are at ‘substantial disadvantage’ because you have cancer.
So if your employer knows about your illness you may be able to suggest reasonable adjustments to help you carry on working or return to work. This could mean, for example, time off for hospital appointments or flexible working arrangements. See page 55 for other examples.

You don’t have to tell your employer you have cancer. But unless they know (or should reasonably know) that you have cancer, they don’t have to make a reasonable adjustment.

Also, if you don’t tell your employer and your ability to do your job is affected, it could cause problems later. You might also be asked questions if you miss a lot of work or you’re less productive.

**Who to talk to**

We use the terms manager or employer in this booklet. There may be different people at your workplace who might be involved. You may want to talk to any or all the following people:  

• your line manager – they are often the first person you talk to
• your human resources (HR) manager
• an occupational health adviser
• your trade union representative.

Some people worry about confidentiality. Ask your employer to keep the information you give them confidential. Only the people you agree to have information should be told.

Our booklet *Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer* has information about confidentiality and laws that protect your rights.
What you can do

If you feel nervous about talking to your manager, you can take someone with you. This could be a friend, family member, work colleague or trade union representative. You can ask that the conversation takes place in a private place and that it’s not rushed.

Write a list of questions or things you’d like to talk about. This could include:

• letting them know who at work you have decided to tell, what you want to tell them and who you’d like to do this

• discussing work changes you and your employer feel might help you carry on working (see pages 31–33)

• asking for information about their policies on, for example, company/organisation sick pay (see page 27) absence from work, occupational health and pensions

• finding out about any support schemes for people going through stressful situations, for example, an employee assistance programme (EAP) that offers counselling

• asking if they would like information about your treatment to help them, or information for employers about supporting someone with cancer at work.

‘My advice to anyone working with cancer would be to talk to your employer about it and think about what you might need if you want to return to work.’

Julia
Keep a note of any discussions you have with your manager about work. This helps you to remember what has been said and can be helpful if anything unexpected comes up later.

If you want to carry on working as normally as possible, tell them so they can support you. If you can’t continue working as usual, they can look at making changes to help you or give you the time off you need.

If you don’t know what to expect until you start treatment, it can be hard to decide how much work to take on. Explain this to your employer now so that they understand you may need to change work plans at short notice. Let them know that things may change during the course of treatment.

Ask for regular meetings with your manager. You can keep them up to date and talk about any changes.

Our leaflet Questions to ask about work and cancer includes questions you can ask your GP, healthcare team, other advisory services and employer. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00 to order a free copy.
Keeping in touch

If you are going to be off sick for a while, you may want to talk about ways of keeping in touch with work. Not having contact may make some people feel out of touch. If contact is too regular it may make you feel under pressure.

You could agree on how often and when your manager can contact you. If your work has a regular update newsletter, you could ask them to email it to you. You may also decide if you want to keep in touch with certain colleagues by phone or email. You can always review this with your manager if your feelings about this change over time.

Asking for a fit note (Statement of Fitness for Work)

If you are off sick for more than a few days, ask your GP or hospital doctor for a fit note (a sick note) to cover your illness. You need a fit note to get sick pay and to claim benefits.

It also allows your doctor or other healthcare professional to give information on how your condition affects your ability to work. This helps your employer understand how they might help you to continue to work or return to work.
During your treatment

Sick pay

Check if your employer has rules or policies about when and how you tell your manager you are off sick. If there aren’t any, tell them within a week of the first day you are sick. Your employer doesn’t have to pay Statutory Sick Pay for any days before this.

Most people are entitled to sick pay. There are two types:

- **Company sick pay** – this is your employer’s own sick pay scheme. Check your contract to find out what you are entitled to. It may be more generous than SSP or paid on top of it. Some employers pay in full up to a certain time.

- **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** – if you aren’t entitled to anything under a company scheme, your employer should still pay you SSP if you are eligible.

See page 47 for more information on sick pay. After a week, your employer can ask you to provide medical evidence (such as a fit note) to support payment of company sick pay or SSP.
How your employer can support you

There are different ways your employer can support you at work during treatment or when you return to work. They usually understand that it is a stressful time and try to be supportive.

Many employers make reasonable adjustments for employees, such as allowing flexible working arrangements. They may also change certain parts of your job to make things easier for you.

There are also other ways your employer may be able to support you. They can tell you:

- about different company policies
- if there is an occupational health service or an employee assistance programme
- about useful organisations that could help you.

It’s helpful to have regular meetings with your manager to discuss how you’re coping. You can talk about how to manage any problems or other changes they can make to help you, if needed.
Your rights at work

It’s important to know about your rights at work when you are talking to your employer. The **Equality Act 2010** and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** (see pages 22–23) protect the rights of workers affected by illnesses like cancer. This means you cannot be treated less favourably than others at work because you have cancer (see pages 62–63).

This legislation considers cancer as a disability. It covers all areas of employment. These include recruitment, terms of employment and any benefits, promotion and training.

This protection does not end when your treatment finishes. You have legal protection against discrimination even when you are in remission (no signs of the cancer) or are cured. An employer must not treat you less favourably for any reason related to cancer you had in the past. It also covers you when you no longer need treatment or move to another employer.

Many employers are supportive. But if this isn’t your experience, look at our section on pages 61–66. Discrimination can include an employer not making reasonable adjustments to allow you to do your job.

Our booklet *Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer* has more detailed information. You can also find more information at [macmillan.org.uk/work](http://macmillan.org.uk/work)
Reasonable adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, employers have to make reasonable adjustments to make sure you are not disadvantaged compared to non-disabled people in the workplace.

What is considered a reasonable adjustment depends on different things. This includes the cost and practicality to your employer of making the adjustment. It also depends on how much the adjustment will benefit you.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments include:

• time off for treatment and appointments
• flexible working arrangements, such as changing your hours or working from home
• extra breaks to help you to cope with tiredness
• changing your job description to avoid difficult tasks, or giving you lighter duties.

Your employer may ask to write to your doctor to get their advice on what may help. They need your permission to do this. You also have the right to see any medical report before it is sent to your employer.

Our section on returning to work has more examples of reasonable adjustment (see page 55). Some of these can also apply during treatment. There is more information on possible reasonable adjustments in our section on coping with side effects (see pages 39–44).
Time off work
You will need to take time off for appointments and treatment. Time off is an example of a reasonable adjustment your employer may be able to make. For example, they might allow you a period of leave for treatment and your job will still be there when you want to go back.

There’s no absolute legal right to paid time off unless your contract of employment specifically states this. But if you discuss this with your employer early on, it will help you both to agree how to deal with this.

Try to tell your employer as far in advance as possible when you need time off. This may make it easier if they need someone to cover your work. If possible, it may help if you can arrange appointments for the start or the end of the day.

Employers may look at time off work in different ways, including:

• as sickness absence
• an agreed reduction in working hours or days per week, which could be temporary or permanent
• as approved unpaid leave
• paid or unpaid compassionate leave.

Your employer or HR department will give you information about the sickness policy and other options. They can explain if different types of leave are paid or unpaid and what you are entitled to.
Flexible working arrangements
This is another example of a possible reasonable adjustment your employer might be able to make. Some examples of flexible working arrangements could include:

- working from home
- flexible start or finish times
- part-time working or job-sharing.

Occupational health

Your workplace may have or be able to provide an occupational health (OH) adviser. You can usually either refer yourself or ask your manager to refer you.

An OH adviser will give you independent work-related health advice based on your situation. They can recommend adjustments to help you carry on working. They also help you to return to work after you have been off for a time.

‘They’re really being helpful with finding ways for me to cut down my commuting time and maybe spend some time working from home, and to ease me back into the job. So I do feel very well supported.’

Tina
Fit for Work

Fit for Work (see page 84 for contact details) provides free, expert and independent advice on work and health for employees, employers and GPs through their website and a telephone line. It doesn’t replace any occupational health service provided by your employer but adds to it.

Your GP or employer can also refer you to Fit for Work for an occupational health assessment. This is when you have been off sick, or are likely to be off sick, for four weeks or more. An occupational health professional will assess your situation and give you advice. They can create a return-to-work plan to help get you back to work.

Fit for Work doesn’t cover people living in Northern Ireland.

Employee assistance programme

Some employers run employee assistance programmes that help you deal with any personal problems that may be affecting your work. This can involve having regular sessions with a professional counsellor. Your manager can tell you if your workplace provides this.
Access to Work

Access to Work is a government programme for people living in England, Scotland and Wales. It can help you or your employer if you have a long-term health condition that affects the way you do your job. It gives advice and practical support to meet extra costs that may arise because of your health.

The scheme may pay for:

• special aids and equipment needed in the workplace as a direct result of your condition
• travel to and from work if you can’t use public transport
• a support worker to help you in the workplace.

Visit [gov.uk/access-to-work/overview](https://gov.uk/access-to-work/overview) for more information.

There is a different system in Northern Ireland. You can find out more at [nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/people-disabilities](https://nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/people-disabilities)
Talking to other people at work

Talking to the people you work with about your diagnosis can be difficult. You may worry about their reactions or if it will be awkward. You may decide to tell people you feel closest to at first. They may be able to help you plan how to tell others.

Telling people can have benefits:

• it gives them the chance to support you and know what to expect
• you can let them know when you need help
• they may suggest helpful ways for you to cope with your work
• it may make you feel closer to the people you work with
• there may be people who have experience of cancer who could support you.

You could give people a short explanation of your treatment and its side effects. Tell them if tiredness is a problem, if your concentration is affected or if you’re at risk of infection.

If some people avoid you, it is usually because they don’t know what to say or are worried about saying the wrong thing. Showing them that you’re willing to talk openly about your illness may help. Our booklet Talking about cancer – a guide for people with cancer has helpful advice.
If you don’t want to tell your colleagues

You may prefer not to tell your work colleagues or to tell only a few people. Some people want to keep this part of their life as normal as possible. It’s important that your wish to be private is respected.

Sometimes treatment side effects, such as hair loss, may make it difficult not to tell people. They may be aware something is wrong, which could make things feel uncomfortable at times. Don’t feel pressurised to explain if you’re not comfortable to do so. You know what works best for you and your situation.

Risk to colleagues

There are still misunderstandings about cancer. For example, some people worry they can catch cancer. Cancer is not infectious and there is no risk to the people you work with.

There is also no risk to people you work with from any treatments you have. Chemotherapy can’t harm anyone you come into contact with. Radiotherapy doesn’t make you radioactive.

People having a certain type of internal radiotherapy to treat cancer of the thyroid may have to avoid close contact with others for a few days. Your doctor or nurse will explain any precautions you need to take when you go home.

Our cancer support specialists on 0808 808 00 00 can give you advice and support.
Coping with side effects or symptoms

You may be coping with some treatment side effects or symptoms at work. There are things you and your employer can do to help make things easier for you.

Plan work days around treatment. Try to avoid physically demanding or stressful tasks the day before treatment and for a few days after it.

We can send you information about different treatments and managing the side effects. We also have a booklet on coping with cancer symptoms. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00.

Tiredness

Tiredness (fatigue) is a common problem. You may feel extremely tired as if you have no strength or energy. It may make it hard or sometimes impossible to do everyday things at work. Tiredness can also make it hard to concentrate or make decisions. You may also feel more emotional and less patient than usual.

If you want to carry on working, ask your manager about looking at ways of making your work less tiring. This is part of making reasonable adjustments (see pages 31–33).
Possible changes could include:
• regular rests and short naps – you may find this useful after an activity or a meal
• working from home
• avoiding physically demanding duties
• planning work around times when you have more energy.

Ask your manager if there is a first aid room or comfortable place you can rest. Keeping a note of how you feel can show when you are usually more tired. This can help you to judge when to work and when to rest.

Regular physical activity can help to reduce tiredness. Even taking a short walk on your lunch break could give you more energy. It can also help to reduce stress.

Explaining the effects of fatigue to your colleagues can help them to understand what you’re coping with. It may be difficult for some people to know how tired you are, especially if you look well.

Our booklet **Coping with fatigue** has more general tips. Visit [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) or call 0808 808 00 00 to order a free copy.
Risk of infection

Some cancer treatments, particularly chemotherapy, can reduce the number of your white blood cells. These are the cells that fight infection. This means you’re more likely to get an infection. Your doctor or nurse will explain when your white blood cell count is likely to be low.

If your white blood cell count is very low, you may not be able to work. It’s a good idea to warn your employer about this possibility.

You will need to avoid people with sore throats, colds, flu, diarrhoea or vomiting, and other kinds of infection such as chickenpox. If you’ve been in touch with someone with an infection, ask your doctor or nurse for advice as soon as possible.

If your workplace is busy you may be mixing with people who have an infection without being aware of it. Ask your employer about working from home when you have more risk of infection – your nurse can tell you this. It’s also best to avoid crowds when travelling by public transport. Ask about flexible working arrangements (see page 33) so you can travel at quieter times.

The Access to Work scheme (see page 35) may be able to provide funding for you to get taxis to work if this is an issue.

‘My HR department organised a deep clean, then distributed anti-bacterial wipes and hand gels. Folks were really good and made more of an effort in the canteen and common areas.’

Ryan
**Risk of bleeding**

Your platelet cells, which help your blood to clot, may be low. If they are, you will need to avoid doing things that may cause you to cut yourself or to bruise.

**Numbness or tingling of the hands and feet**

Some chemotherapy and targeted therapy drugs affect the nerves. This can cause numbness, pins and needles, or pain in your hands and feet (called peripheral neuropathy). It may make it difficult to hold things or to write or type so certain tasks may take you longer. Ask if there are any adjustments your employer can make to your role to help with this.

Peripheral neuropathy usually gradually gets better in the months after treatment but sometimes it is permanent. We have more information about peripheral neuropathy.

**Changes to your appearance**

Treatment may cause skin changes, weight changes, hair loss, or scars from surgery. This can be hard if your work involves face-to-face meetings with clients or the public.

It takes time to adjust to a change in your appearance and to feel less anxious. Our booklet *Body image and cancer* has suggestions on dealing with other people’s reactions and managing anxiety.
If you have an obvious change in your appearance, you could ask someone at work to tell the people you work with. Or you may prefer to tell people yourself about the cause.

If your job involves dealing directly with the public it may help to work alongside someone else for a while. This is just until you build up your confidence.

Some people may work from home until they feel more confident. Try to make sure this is short-term. If concerns about your body image interfere with work or socialising, it’s important to talk your doctor or nurse. There are different ways they can help you.

If you have hair loss, our booklet *Coping with hair loss* has helpful advice. Our booklet *Feel more like you* gives advice on caring for your skin, nails and hair and covering up changes during treatment.

**Other side effects or symptoms**

There may be other side effects or symptoms depending on the type of cancer you have and your treatment. Let your doctor know if you have other difficulties, for example pain, feeling sick or eating problems. They can prescribe medicines to help or give you advice. If your symptoms don’t improve, tell your doctor or nurse.

Some people who have finished treatment may develop long-term side effects (see page 53).
Tips for dealing with side effects or symptoms

Talk to your manager about making adjustments to help you manage side effects or symptoms.

You could both think about some of the following:

• more flexible working arrangements (see page 33)
• scheduling your time around the days you’re most needed at work
• agreeing which tasks are most important, what you can manage and what you can ask others to do
• changing your duties or making any adjustments to your role you think would help
• home working when possible – your manager can tell you if there’s a policy and what’s involved
• having someone who will assess which phone calls you need to take and who will forward important emails
• letting colleagues know how you’ll manage your work, how they can contact you, and when you’ll check in with them.

Taking good care of yourself is also important. Eating well can help you to feel better and can give you more energy. You may find our booklet Healthy eating and cancer helpful. Finding ways to relieve stress can also help. Our booklet Cancer and complementary therapies has information on this.
Your finances

When making decisions about taking time off work, you may need to think about your finances and any possible benefits you may be entitled to.

Some of the information in this section may also be helpful if you’re going back to work after treatment.

How Macmillan can help

Dealing with finances and benefits can be stressful at any time but particularly when you are already coping with a serious illness.

You can call the Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 for free and speak to one of our financial guides or a welfare rights adviser. You may find both services useful. They can give you information about Macmillan Grants and debt advice through our charity partner StepChange Debt Charity.

Our booklet Help with the cost of cancer has detailed information about financial help and benefits. You can order a free copy at be.macmillan.org.uk
Financial guides
Our financial guides can assess your situation and give you personalised guidance. They help you understand the options available to you with any insurance policies you hold. You may have policies that cover you for income replacement, life and critical illness cover, or loan and mortgage payments.

They can give information about other conditions that might apply to any insurance policies you hold. For example, Waiver of Premium benefit allows you to take a break from payments until you are fit to return to work. They can also help you find an independent financial adviser.

Welfare rights advisers
The benefits system is complicated and applying can take lots of time. Our welfare rights advisers are trained to help you to claim any benefits you are entitled to.

You may also be able to meet a Macmillan welfare rights adviser in person through a local service. You can find out if this is available near you macmillan.org.uk/in-your-area

Other organisations, such as your local Citizens Advice (see page 83), can also help.
Statutory sick pay (SSP)

If you are employed but unable to work, you can usually get SSP. You can claim if you are:

- off work for four days in a row (including non-working days)
- earning £112 or more a week.

Your employer will pay SSP for up to 28 weeks. The weekly rate is currently £88.45 a week. Before SSP ends, find out if you can get a benefit called Employment and Support Allowance (see pages 48–49).

Occupational or company sick pay

Many employers run their own sick pay scheme with more generous payments and terms than the statutory minimum. Some employers ask for a self-certification form when you are off sick for fewer than seven days. You can get these from your employer.

Before your SSP is due to end, your employer should give you a form called SSP1. It tells you when your last payment will be and gives you information about applying for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

This benefit is for people who cannot work because they are ill or disabled. There are two types of ESA:

- contribution-based – you can get this if you have made enough national insurance contributions
- income-related – you can get this if your income and savings are below a certain level.

Since October 2013, a new benefit called **Universal Credit** has started replacing income-related ESA in England, Scotland and Wales.

ESA is currently paid at a basic rate of up to £73.10 weekly for the first 13 weeks. Some people may need an assessment to see how their illness limits their ability to work. This is called a **work capability assessment**.

If you qualify for ESA, after 13 weeks you are placed in either the **work-related activity group** or the **support group**.

If you are waiting for, having, or recovering from cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy you are placed in the support group. You get a smaller extra weekly payment in addition to the basic rate. You don’t need a work assessment.

If your ability to work is limited, but not severely, you are placed in the work-related activity group. You get a smaller extra payment in addition to the basic rate.

This benefit is paid for up to a year. After this it stops unless you claim and qualify for income-related ESA (or Universal Credit), or you ask to be placed in the support group and are accepted.
Permitted work
Although ESA is for people who are unable to work, you may be allowed to do a certain amount of ‘permitted work’. This may be useful when you’re thinking about going back to work. Speak to one of our welfare rights advisers to find out more.

Benefits if you’re on a low income
Depending on your income, you may be able to claim certain benefits when you go back to work. Contact a Macmillan welfare rights adviser on 0808 808 00 00 for more information.

Universal Credit
This is a new benefit for people looking for work or on a low income. In England, Scotland and Wales, it has started replacing some other benefits.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
This is for people who have problems moving around and looking after themselves. You can claim it if you are in or out of work. PIP is replacing an older benefit called Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

Other benefits
If you get the higher mobility rate of PIP or DLA, you don’t pay road tax. You also get a Blue Badge parking concession (see page 86). You can use it to buy or lease a car under the Motability Scheme (see page 87).
WORKING AFTER TREATMENT

Going back to work 52
Discrimination at work 61
Looking for a new job 67
For many people, going back to work when they feel ready is a big step in their recovery. It can bring back a sense of normality, financial stability, routine and social contact.

You may want to go back to work but still feel nervous about doing your job well or about how people will react. You may still be coping with side effects or difficult feelings. Some people may feel too well to stay at home but not quite well enough to deal with work pressures.

Talk to your family and friends about how you feel so they can support you. Recovery takes time so it’s important not to expect too much of yourself. Try not to put pressure on yourself. Don’t worry if you have one or two setbacks – this is to be expected.

Your employer can do a lot to support your return to work – see pages 29–35 for more information. There are also different organisations that can support you.

Our booklet Life after cancer treatment also has some helpful advice. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call 0808 808 00 00 to order a free copy.
Treatment side effects

You may still have some side effects when you go back to work. See pages 39–44 for more information.

Many people return to their usual working life after treatment. But some people may have ongoing treatment side effects which can affect their work life. These are called late effects or long-term side effects and may include:

- tiredness for months or sometimes years after treatment
- soreness or limited movement of an arm after breast surgery
- needing to eat little and often after stomach surgery
- needing to use the toilet more often after bladder or bowel cancer treatment.

You may need support from your employer to put in place reasonable adjustments to help you.

‘I was off work for six months and I knew I was getting better because I was just itching to get back to work. And it was the greatest day of my life I think – going back to work, being me again, and seeing the look on people’s faces.’

Fred
Agreeing a return-to-work plan

You and your manager can agree on a return-to-work plan. This should be flexible and will need regular reviews to allow for changes along the way. Make sure you’re fully involved in discussions. It’s useful to keep your own notes. You may also want to ask if someone can go with you to meetings for support.

If you’re still coping with treatment side effects (see pages 39–44) you can discuss possible temporary or longer-term changes to help you. You can talk to your employer about reasonable adjustments they may be able to make to help you get back to work. They have to consider this by law.

If your workplace has an occupational health adviser, your manager can arrange for you to see them. You can keep in touch with them until you’re fully back at work.

If there isn’t an occupational health service, Fit for Work (see page 34) may provide you with a return-to-work plan. Your GP or employer needs to refer you to Fit for Work so that you can be assessed first.

If things at work have changed while you were away, you can ask for time or training to catch up. If treatment has affected your ability to drive or carry out tasks you did before, you’ll need to talk about changes to your job.
Making reasonable adjustments

Your employer should consider making reasonable adjustments to help you get back to work. The adjustments already mentioned (see pages 31–33) can also apply when you go back to work.

Some others include:

• a phased return to work
• flexible working arrangements, such as part-time working, flexible start or finish times or working from home
• changing your job description to remove tasks that cause particular difficulty
• allowing you to do ‘light duties’ for a time
• moving you to a post with more suitable duties, if you agree
• changing performance targets to take into account the effect of sick leave and side effects such as tiredness.

There may also be practical adjustments your employer can make:

• extra breaks to help you cope with tiredness and a place to rest away from your desk
• a reserved parking space near your work
• moving your work base – for example, transferring you to a ground floor office if you’re breathless
• making sure you have suitable access if you’re using a wheelchair or crutches
• providing toilet facilities you can get to easily
• providing appropriate software, such as voice-activated software if you’re not able to type.
Phased return to work

This is an example of a reasonable adjustment your employer may be able to make to help you get back to work. If you can, plan to return gradually and build up to your usual hours. You can agree this with your manager or HR department.

You and your manager can agree on the important parts of your role. You can decide what to focus on until you feel stronger.

You may need more regular rest breaks. Talk to your manager to see what adjustments around this they can put in place. It’s important to try and not do too much too soon, especially if your job involves manual work.

Recovery may not always be straightforward. You may have some setbacks or need more support than you thought. Try to stay flexible and talk to your manager if you need more support.

‘I had a consultation with our occupational health team. We devised a return-to-work plan, which involved reduced hours building up to when I’d go back full-time. So initially it was only one or two hours a day for the first week and then building up.’

David
Flexible working arrangements

If your job is too demanding to cope with right now, you could think about working part-time or changing your duties or working hours. These are examples of reasonable adjustments your employer may be able to make to help you get back to work.

Talk to your manager or HR department as soon as possible about any possible changes that would help you return to work.

You can agree how long temporary changes to your work should last and how often you review this. Be careful about making permanent changes, such as reducing your hours. You might change how you feel about this later.

What may seem difficult about work right now may look a lot easier in a few weeks or months. Recovery is a gradual process so how you feel now may be likely to change.

‘I stopped working full-time and I’m now working in a job-share so that I have more time for me. It makes you look at the world and your life in a different way.’

Simone
Finances when returning to work

Before you go back to work, you may need to think about how this will affect your finances. You can contact Macmillan’s financial guides (see page 45) on 0808 808 00 00. They can help you understand your options.

If your mortgage, bank loan or credit agreement was being paid by an insurance policy, it will end when you go back to work. If you’re thinking of working part-time, check how much you need to cover your monthly outgoings.

You build up annual leave while on sick leave. You could use annual leave during a phased return to work if your employer doesn’t pay full wages. Check if you have income from occupational pensions, private pensions or life assurance. You might be able to freeze, transfer or cash in a pension.

If you have been out of work for a long time, you may have money problems. Some people may be in debt. StepChange Debt Charity can give you advice (see page 86) if you are in this situation.

We have a booklet called Managing your debt that you may find useful. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk to order a free copy.
If you’ve been claiming benefits

Each person’s entitlement to benefits has conditions specific to their situation. Going back to work will affect this. Certain benefits will stop but you may still be entitled to some benefits depending on your income (see pages 48–49). You may need to think about how much you have to earn to make up for the loss of benefits you get now. The number of hours you work could have an effect on your benefits.

It’s important to get advice from an experienced benefits adviser. You can call our welfare rights advisers on 0808 808 00 00. You can also check if there’s a benefits adviser at your hospital. Citizens Advice (see page 83) can give you advice, too.

Our booklet Help with the cost of cancer has more information. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk to order a free copy.
Discrimination at work

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination (DDA) Act 1995 it’s unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person because of their disability.

If you have cancer, the law considers you to be disabled. If you are treated less favourably than others at work because you have cancer, this is called discrimination.

The Equality Act and the DDA protects anyone who has or previously had cancer. If you had cancer in the past and are in remission (no signs of the cancer) or are cured, you are still covered. People applying for jobs and in many cases people who are self employed are also protected.

Our leaflet *Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer* has more detailed information.
Examples of disability discrimination

Discrimination connected to cancer can happen in different ways. Here are some possible examples of what could be disability discrimination for people affected by cancer. It may include an employer:

• not making reasonable adjustments to allow you to do your job
• giving you a warning for having a lot of sick time without taking your illness into account
• suggesting it would be better if you retired or stopped working because you have cancer
• giving you a poor appraisal or performance review for a reason connected to the cancer
• demoting you to a lower-paid or less demanding job without your agreement, for a reason relating to having cancer
• making you feel intimidated or uncomfortable because you have cancer (harassment) so you end up feeling that you can’t stay in your job
• choosing you for redundancy for a reason related to cancer
• not giving you a job because of cancer
• treating you unfairly because you have complained about discrimination – this is called victimisation (see opposite page).

There are several types of disability discrimination. Our booklet *Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer* has many examples and more detailed information.
Some problems may happen because of misunderstandings about cancer. Your employer may assume you can’t do the same job any more or that you may be less committed to work because of your illness. Or they may think the stress of your illness makes you less suitable for promotion. Sometimes colleagues may think they need to do extra work because they assume you can’t do your job.

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

Victimisation

This is when you are treated unfairly because you have done (or will do something) that’s protected by the law. It can also be when someone thinks you have done it or that you will do it. This includes making a complaint about discrimination or harassment under the Equality Act or the DDA (see pages 22–23).

Here’s an example of victimisation:

Jim’s boss was being awkward about his request for time off for a chemotherapy appointment. Jim reported the problem to the HR department. The HR manager told Jim’s boss that she had to give him the time off.

Jim’s boss was angry that Jim spoke to HR so she stopped him from going on a training course and gave him a bad appraisal.
If you feel you’re being discriminated against

Try to work with your manager or HR department to resolve the problem in an informal way. Talking openly to your manager about both your needs may help.

If you feel unable to talk to your manager, ask someone in HR or an occupational health adviser for help. If you belong to a trade union, you can get help and support from their representative.

What you can do

• Find out about relevant company policies from your manager or human resources department. Check the employee handbook or intranet if you have one.

• Go to your employer with suggestions and solutions. This shows your commitment to your job.

• Know your legal rights – contact your trade union (if you are a member of one) or speak to one of the organisations on pages 83–88.

• If you need adjustments at your workplace, ask about the Access to Work scheme (see page 35).
Unresolved problems

Try to sort out problems by talking with your employers if possible. But if this doesn’t work, you may want to think about making a formal complaint (sometimes called a formal grievance). Your employer should have a policy that explains how you do this.

If you feel your grievance isn’t being dealt with fairly and your employer is being unreasonable, you can complain to an employment tribunal. This can help resolve employment disputes between employees and employers.

If you’re thinking about making a claim to an employment tribunal it’s a good idea to contact:

• your union representative if you have one
• ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) in England, Scotland or Wales – you have to contact ACAS first if you want to make a claim to an Employment Tribunal
• the Labour Relations Agency if you live in Northern Ireland
• a solicitor who specialises in employment law.

ACAS runs a scheme to try to sort out disputes and avoid going to an employment tribunal.

There are organisations that give information about legal rights and employment issues (see page 83–86). You usually have to make a complaint to the tribunal within three months of the issue you are complaining about.
There are costs involved in making a case to an Employment Tribunal. This will depend on the type of claim.

The following organisations provide information about discrimination and your rights:

- Equality Advisory Support Service
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

See page 84 for contact details for these organisations.

Our booklet *Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer* has more information.
Looking for a new job

Looking for a new job after cancer treatment can be a positive sign of recovery. You may decide to return to the kind of work you did before or to have a complete change. Some people look for a less stressful job or one they would enjoy more. Others may decide to try something they have always wanted to do.

If you’re looking for a new job, you may wonder if you have to tell an employer you have or have had cancer. The Equality Act 2010 (see pages 22–23) means employers should only ask questions about your health in limited situations during the recruitment process (see below).

In Northern Ireland, employers are allowed to ask job applicants about their health. But under the DDA (see pages 22–23), they cannot discriminate against you because of your disability.

An employer can ask you for information about your health after they have offered you a job. If they then decide to withdraw the job offer, this must be for reasons that are non-discriminatory.

An employer can only ask questions about your health before they offer you a job in certain circumstances. This could be to:

- make sure they are not discriminating against anyone in their recruitment process
- make sure they recruit people from a range of different groups, such as people with disabilities – this is called positive action
- check if you need any reasonable adjustments, for example, having your interview in a ground floor room
- find out if you will be able to do something that’s an essential part of the job.
They also have to think about any reasonable adjustment (see page 55) they could make to allow you to do the job.

Questions related to disability must not be used to discriminate against a disabled person. A possible employer is only allowed to ask questions about your health or disability for the reasons listed above, if necessary.

It’s important not to mislead a possible employer. Giving false or incomplete information that is found out at a later stage could put you in a difficult position.

If you’re pressed for an answer about your health, it may be best to be open about the cancer. But this is your decision. If you don’t get the job as a result of this, you may be able to bring a discrimination claim against them.

You may not consider yourself to be disabled. But if an employer asks if you are disabled, you should say ‘yes’ for the purposes of the Equality Act and the DDA. Everyone with cancer is covered by these Acts and cancer is termed as a disability.
Preparing for an interview

Before an interview, rehearse how to answer any questions about your health. If you are asked about gaps in your work history you can explain you were dealing with some health issues. Be clear you are now ready and keen to get back to work. Emphasise the skills and strengths you have to do the job rather than talk about your illness.

There are different organisations that can help people with a disability to find work. You can find more information at [gov.uk/looking-for-work-if-disabled](http://gov.uk/looking-for-work-if-disabled) (for England, Scotland and Wales) and at [nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employment-support-information](http://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employment-support-information) (for Northern Ireland).

Access to Work (see page 35) can also provide someone to help you at a job interview. It can also help people who are about to start a job.
NOT RETURNING TO WORK

Giving up work  72
Early retirement  74
Giving up work

Some people decide to give up work when they are diagnosed with cancer. They may want to focus on getting on with treatment and spending time with family and close friends.

If work has been an important part of your life, you may worry about coping with this change. But you may find it gives you a new outlook and time to do things that are important to you. Some people may decide to return to work later on or choose to do something different. Others may decide to get involved in volunteering. It’s about what’s right for you and your situation.

Let close family or friends know if you are coping with difficult feelings about giving up work. Some people may find it helpful to talk to a professional counsellor. Ask your doctor or nurse about this.

‘I stopped work straight away. I was so shell-shocked, there was no way I could have held it together to go to work. I have two young children, so even if I could have managed work, I would have had nothing left for them at the end of the day.’

Julie
Before you decide to give up work, you may need to think about how it will affect your finances. When you give up work, you lose rights associated with employment, for example:

- occupational sick pay
- death in service benefit
- Statutory Sick Pay
- pension rights
- any occupation-linked private medical insurance.

**Help for carers and family members**

If a partner or family member is taking time off work to look after you, they may be entitled to compassionate or unpaid leave. They may find it helpful to read our booklet *Working while caring for someone with cancer.*
Early retirement

If you want to take early retirement on health grounds or for personal reasons, you need advice from your pension administrator. You may be able to take early payment of your pension on the grounds of ill health depending on the rules of your particular pension scheme.

Early retirement is a big decision, particularly because of health reasons. Macmillan’s financial guides can help you understand the options available to you and questions to think about first. Getting the right advice may help you get a higher income from your pension.

Call us on 0808 808 00 00 to speak to a financial guide. We also have a booklet about pensions with more detailed information. Or you can get advice from an independent financial adviser.

Some of the options you may need to think about are:

• Drawing on an occupational pension for health reasons can mean you get a higher amount of pension.

• People who have a life expectancy of less than 12 months are normally able to take their pension fund in the form of a tax-free lump sum.

• If you choose to retire early but are medically fit to work, the level of your pension may be lower.

• Some schemes may not allow you to retire early if you’re fit to work so you need to check this.
You will need to think about your own circumstances before deciding on a final settlement. This may mean deciding between a large lump-sum payment plus a small monthly income, or a small lump-sum payment plus a large monthly income.

If you’re claiming ESA (see pages 48–49), it may be reduced if you get payments of more than a certain amount each week from a pension.

‘I was able to get a favourable financial deal from my employer, and I was able to take retirement and still work part-time. So in that way it worked out very well. But I still felt I had a bit of my career left to run.’

Michael
FURTHER INFORMATION

About our information  78
Other ways we can help you  80
Other useful organisations  83
Your notes and questions  89
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 leaflets or booklets like this one. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00.

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

All of our information is also available online at macmillan.org.uk/cancerinformation

There you’ll also find videos featuring real-life 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
• ebooks
• large print
• translations.

Find out more at macmillan.org.uk/otherformats

If you’d like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk or call us on 0808 808 00 00.
Help us improve our information

We know that the people who use our information are the real experts. That’s why we always involve them in our work. If you’ve been affected by cancer, you can help us improve our information.

We give you the chance to comment on a variety of information including booklets, leaflets and fact sheets.

If you’d like to hear more about becoming a reviewer, email reviewing@macmillan.org.uk You can get involved from home whenever you like, and we don’t ask for any special skills – just an interest in our cancer information.
Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we’re here to support you. No one should face cancer alone.

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 Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. Our cancer support specialists can:
• help with any medical questions you have about your cancer or 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.

Call us on 0808 808 00 00 or email us via our website, macmillan.org.uk/talktous

Information centres
Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. There, you can speak with someone face to face.

Visit one to get the information you need, or if you’d like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone alone and in confidence.

Find your nearest centre at macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres or call us on 0808 808 00 00.
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’s why we help to bring people together in their communities and online.

Support groups
Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, 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

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

The Macmillan healthcare team
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.

‘Everyone is so supportive on the online community, they know exactly what you’re going through. It can be fun too. It’s not all just chats about cancer.’

Mal
Help with money worries

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you’ve been affected in this way, we can help.

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

Help accessing benefits
Our benefits advisers can offer advice and information on benefits, tax credits, grants and loans. They can help you work out what financial help you could be entitled to. They can also help you complete your forms and apply for benefits.

Macmillan Grants
Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing to a much-needed break.

Call us on 0808 808 00 00 to speak to a financial guide or benefits adviser, or to find out more about Macmillan Grants. We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area. Visit macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.

Help with work and cancer

Whether you’re 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

Macmillan’s My Organiser app
This free mobile app can help you manage your treatment, from appointment times and contact details, to reminders for when to take your medication. Search ‘My Organiser’ on the Apple App Store or Google Play on your phone.
Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support.

Access to Work
Tel 0345 268 8489
www.gov.uk/access-to-work
Provides advice and practical support to people with long-term health conditions and their employers to help pay for practical support so you can do your job.

Access to Work (NI)
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.

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
Euston Tower,
286 Euston Road,
London NW1 3JJ
Helpline 0300 123 1100

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

Citizens Advice
Provides advice on a variety of issues including financial, legal, housing and employment issues. Find details for your local office in the phone book or on one of the following websites:

England and Wales
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Scotland
www.cas.org.uk

Northern Ireland
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

You can also find advice online in a range of languages at adviceguide.org.uk
Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)
Freepost FPN4431
Tel 0808 800 0082
Textphone 0808 800 0084
www.equalityadvisoryservice.com
Promotes equality and provides information to people about their rights in England, Scotland and Wales.

Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI)
Equality House, 7–9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DP
Tel 028 9050 0600
www.equalityni.org
Aims to advance equality, promote equality of opportunity, encourage good relations and challenge discrimination through promotion, advice and enforcement.

Fit for Work England and Wales Advice Line
0800 032 6235 (English)
0800 032 6233 (Cymraeg)
www.fitforwork.org
Fit for Work is free and helps employees stay in or return to work. It provides general health and work advice to employees, employers and GPs. It can also provide an occupational health assessment on referral from a GP or employer.

Fit for Work Scotland Advice Line 0800 019 2211
(Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)
www.fitforworkscotland.scot

Labour Relations Agency
2–16 Gordon Street, Belfast BT1 2LG
Tel 028 9032 1442
Email info@lra.org.uk
Responsible for promoting the improvement of employment relations in Northern Ireland. Provides advice and support to both employees and employers, and helps resolve disputes.
Money or legal advice and information

Benefit Enquiry Line
Northern Ireland
Tel 0800 220 674
(Mon–Wed and Fri, 9am–5pm, Thu, 10am–5pm)
Textphone 0800 243 787
www.nidirect.gov.uk/money-tax-and-benefits
Provides information and advice about disability benefits and carers’ benefits in Northern Ireland.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Disability Benefits Helpline
08457 123 456
Textphone 0845 722 4433
Personal Independence Payment Helpline
0845 850 3322
Textphone 0845 601 6677
Manages state benefits in England, Scotland and Wales.

Law Society
113 Chancery Lane,
London WC2A 1PL
Tel 020 7242 1222
www.lawsociety.org.uk
Can provide details of solicitors in England and Wales.

Law Society of Scotland
Atria One,
144 Morrison St,
Edinburgh EH3 8EX
Tel 0131 226 7411
Email lawscot@lawscot.org.uk
www.lawscot.org.uk
Can provide details of solicitors in Scotland.

Law Society of Northern Ireland
96 Victoria Street,
Belfast BT1 3GN
Tel 028 9023 1614
www.lawsoc-ni.org
Can provide details of solicitors in Northern Ireland.

National Debtline
(England, Scotland and Wales)
Tricorn House,
51–53 Hagley Road,
Birmingham B16 8TP
Freephone 0808 808 4000
(Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm, Sat, 9.30am–1pm)
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
A national telephone helpline for people with debt problems. The service is free, confidential and independent, and the call handlers also distribute free self-help materials.
StepChange Debt Charity
Wade House, Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8NG
Tel 080 0138 1111
www.stepchange.org
Provides free debt advice through phone, email, the website and online through live chats with advisers.

The Personal Finance Society
www.findanadviser.org
Allows you to search for qualified financial advisers in your area.

Turn2Us
www.turn2us.org.uk
Has information about benefits and grants. You can often apply for support directly from the website.

Unbiased
www.unbiased.co.uk
Provides advice about benefits and financial issues. You can also search for a financial adviser.

Equipment and advice on living with disability

Blue Badge Scheme
(Department for Transport)
Tel Contact your local authority
www.gov.uk/browse/driving/blue-badge-parking
(England, Scotland and Wales)
www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/blue-badge-scheme-guide-badge-holders
(Northern Ireland)
Allows drivers or passengers with severe mobility problems to park close to where they need to go.

Disability Rights UK
12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF
Tel 020 7250 3222
www.disabilityrightsuk.org
A national registered charity that works to improve the living standards of disabled people. Provides information about benefits and disability rights.
Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)
380–384 Harrow Road,
London W9 2HU
**Tel** 0300 999 0004
(Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm)
**Email** helpline@dlf.org.uk
**www.dlf.org.uk**
The DLF is a national charity that provides free, impartial advice about all types of disability equipment and mobility products through its helpline, website and Equipment Demonstration Centre.

Motability Scheme
City Gate House,
22 Southwark Bridge Road,
London SE1 9HB
**Tel** 0300 456 4566 (Mon–Fri, 8am–7pm, Sat, 9am–1pm)
**Minicom** 0845 675 0009
**www.motability.co.uk**
Enables disabled people to exchange either their higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or their War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement to get a new car, powered wheelchair or scooter.

General cancer support organisations

**Cancer Black Care**
79 Acton Lane,
London NW10 8UT
**Tel** 020 8961 4151
**Email** info@cancerblackcare.org.uk
**www.cancerblackcare.org.uk**
Offers information and support for people with cancer from ethnic communities, their friends, carers and families.

**Cancer Focus Northern Ireland**
40–44 Eglantine Avenue,
Belfast BT9 6DX
**Tel** 0800 783 3339
(Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm)
**Email** hello@cancerfocusni.org
**www.cancerfocusni.org**
Offers a variety of services to people affected by cancer, including a free helpline, counselling and links to local support groups.
Cancer Support Scotland
Calman Cancer Support Centre,
75 Shelley Road,
Glasgow G12 0ZE
Tel 0800 652 4531
Email info@
cancersupportscotland.org
www.
cancersupportscotland.org
Runs cancer support groups throughout Scotland. Also offers free complementary therapies and counselling to anyone affected by cancer.

Maggie’s Centres
1st Floor,
One Waterloo Street,
Glasgow G2 6AY
Tel 0300 123 1801
Email enquiries@
maggiescentres.org
www.maggiescentres.org
Maggie’s Centres provide information about cancer, benefits advice, and emotional or psychological support.

Tenovus
Head Office,
Gleider House,
Ty Glas Road,
Cardiff CF14 5BD
Tel 0808 808 1010
(Mon–Sun, 8am–8pm)
www.tenovus.org.uk
Aims to help everyone get equal access to cancer treatment and support. Funds research and provides support such as mobile cancer support units, a free helpline, an ‘Ask the nurse’ service on the website and benefits advice.
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’s Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by Macmillan’s Working Through Cancer team.

With thanks to: Irene Carey, Project Manager, Work Support Project; Liz Egan, Macmillan Working Through Cancer Programme Lead; Pam Kelly, Volunteer Trainer for Macmillan at Work; Andrew Paterson, Occupational Health Adviser; Caroline Payne, Welfare Rights Team Leader; Michelle Rouse, Working through Cancer Development Manager; and Robert Watkins, Macmillan Financial Guidance Technical Lead. Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

Sources

We’ve listed a sample of the sources used in this publication below. If you’d like further information about the sources we use, please contact us at bookletfeedback@macmillan.org.uk

Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It’s just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer. They’re 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’re there 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

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

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.

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?

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

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

Call us to find out more
0300 1000 200
macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved
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 / /

Don’t 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’d rather donate online go to 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 about work and cancer. It is for anyone who is working and has been diagnosed with cancer. You may not know how cancer will affect work in the short term or in the future.

The booklet explains how cancer and its treatments can affect your work life. It gives advice on managing work and cancer.

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit 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, eBooks, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.


What’s this logo? Visit macmillan.org.uk/ourinformation