

# QUESTIONS ABOUT WORKING WHEN YOU HAVE CANCER?

We're here to help

Richard, diagnosed with  
kidney cancer in 2018.

**MACMILLAN**  
**CANCER SUPPORT**  
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU



• We help people with cancer understand their rights at work •

Sian, Work Support Adviser

We know living with cancer can be difficult. That's why we're here for you, whatever cancer throws your way. Cancer can cause uncertainties in your work life. You may not know how it will affect work in the short term or in the future.

## Your rights at work

It is important to understand your rights following a cancer diagnosis and what support is available to you.

If you are living with cancer now, or have had cancer in the past, you are protected under equalities legislation from unfair treatment or discrimination at work for the rest of your life.

This means it's illegal for an employer to treat you unfairly or discriminate against you because of your cancer.

Employers should support you by making reasonable adjustments to help you stay in or return to work.

There is no fixed description of a reasonable adjustment. Examples could include:

- adjusting your work pattern
- working from home, or
- changing performance targets to allow for any sick leave and side effects

Find out more about your rights at work by visiting **[macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork)**

## How we can help

Our Work Support Service can help you understand your rights at work if you have been diagnosed with cancer. They can give advice on things like:

- How to talk to your employer about your cancer diagnosis
- What to say if you're self-employed
- How to discuss any adjustments at work you might need
- Your rights around taking time off and sick pay
- What to do if you feel you are being victimised or harassed at work
- One-off legal advice on work matters

They can also offer advice if you're caring for someone with cancer about the impact this may have on your work.

## Employed when diagnosed with cancer?

Talking to your employer about your cancer diagnosis can be the first step to getting the support you need to stay in your job or return to work after treatment. We understand it might be a difficult chat; but knowing what you can ask for will hopefully make it a little easier for you.

First of all you can ask your employer to make changes to the way you work to help you carry on working. These are called reasonable adjustments and are usually things like reducing your hours or providing special equipment. As the term suggests, they need to be things your employer can reasonably do.

You can also ask about:

- The company's policies for people diagnosed with cancer
- If there is an occupational health service or an employee assistance programme
- If they know about other useful organisations that could help you

Of course it's up to you whether you tell your boss you have cancer. But unless they know (or should reasonably know) they can't be expected to make reasonable adjustments to help you.



# Macmillan's guidance on my rights helped me return to work.👏

Gentian, diagnosed with rectal cancer in 2017.



## Self-employed when diagnosed with cancer?

There are some things you can do to manage the situation. If you run your own business, deciding how much work to take on may be tricky as there's no way of knowing how you'll cope with treatment until it starts. But telling your clients and colleagues that your plans may need to change at short notice will help you keep some control. You may also find they're okay to work around you.

If you're employed under a contract, you may be protected from being treated differently because you have cancer. A contract is an agreement between you and an employer that you will personally do work and be paid for it.

However, in other situations you may not have legal protection against discrimination. But you may be able to claim benefits and Macmillan can help you with this.

## Working while caring for someone with cancer?

If you're having to juggle work with caring for a loved one with cancer, there are laws to support you. You may have the right to ask your employer for flexible working arrangements such as reduced hours or working from home. You can also ask to take time off work in an emergency.

We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.

## Further support and ways to contact the Work Support Service



Call us free on **0808 808 00 00**  
Our Work Support Advisers are available  
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm



Email us on **macmillan.org.uk/writetous**



Visit **macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork**



Ask a question on our Online Community  
**macmillan.org.uk/worksupportservice**

Our Work Support Service can also connect you with our other specialist teams if you need physical, emotional or financial support, or if you just need a chat.



**Macmillan.org.uk**