

# 10 top tips for line managers

**Work and cancer series**



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

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

## 10 top tips

- 1 Remember that communication is important
- 2 Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments
- 3 Respect your employee's right to privacy
- 4 Be sensitive to your employee's needs
- 5 Check guidelines and policies
- 6 Find out about financial support
- 7 Respect carers' rights at work
- 8 Discuss a return-to-work plan
- 9 Recognise the impact on your team
- 10 Remember that Macmillan is here to help

# 1

## **Remember that communication is important**

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

# 2

## **Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments**

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

# 3

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

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

# 4

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

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

# 5

## Check guidelines and policies

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

# 6

## Find out about financial support

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

# 7

## Respect carers' rights at work

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

# 8

## Discuss a return-to-work plan

If your employee is off work, agree a return-to-work plan with them when they are ready. This can help you find out what support they might need at work before, during and after treatment. Their return-to-work plan might involve a phased return (increasing their hours slowly over a period of time). You could also consider reasonable adjustments to support their well-being (tip 2). After the employee returns to work, it is good practice to have regular discussions about how things are going.

# 9

## Recognise the impact on your team

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

# 10

## Remember Macmillan is here to help

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



# Work and cancer support from Macmillan

Macmillan at Work is a programme that provides:

- expert training
- information and support
- resources, such as the **Work and cancer toolkit**.

If anyone in your organisation is affected by cancer, the toolkit provides guidance and practical tips for you and your employees.

It includes the booklet **Managing cancer in the workplace**, which has more detailed information for managers. You can order this separately from **[be.macmillan.org.uk/work](https://be.macmillan.org.uk/work)**

You can order the toolkit and sign up to Macmillan at Work by visiting **[macmillan.org.uk/atwork](https://macmillan.org.uk/atwork)**

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## Sources

Below is a sample of the sources used. If you would like more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **[cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)**

<https://www.gov.uk/> [accessed May 2022]

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> [accessed May 2022]

## Thanks

This leaflet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by Michelle Rouse Griffiths, Professional Development and Knowledge Lead, Macmillan Cancer Support.

Thanks to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories. We welcome feedback on our information. If you have any, please contact **[cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)**

**This leaflet has tips that will help you support your employee through diagnosis, treatment and living with cancer. It also includes tips for supporting carers.**

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

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?  
Visit **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats** or call our support line.

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