

CANCER AND WORKING GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS, HR AND LINE MANAGERS

Cancer and working

– guidelines for employers, HR and line managers

These guidelines have been published as a result of a collaboration between Cancerbackup, the CIPD, and the Working with Cancer (WwC) group.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| First steps: meet with the employee | 6 |
| After the first steps meeting | 8 |
| During treatment: maintaining employee involvement and engagement | 9 |
| Returning to work | 10 |
| Disability caused by cancer | 11 |
| Giving up work after cancer | 12 |
| Death from cancer | 13 |
| Legal aspects, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) | 14 |
| Conclusion | 15 |
| Appendix A Cancer policy template | 16 |
| Appendix B Working with Cancer Survey: Summary of key findings | 22 |
| Appendix C Case studies | 23 |
| Appendix D Information sources | 26 |

Introduction

Development of the guidelines

Each year approximately 90,000 people of working age are diagnosed with cancer. Each year, as treatments for cancer improve, more and more people who have cancer are learning to live with it as a chronic rather than a terminal illness, as are their families, friends and colleagues at work. But has the world of work grasped these facts?

A recent survey identified the need for advice and guidance on how to deal with cancer and cancer-related issues in the workplace. The guidelines have been developed to fill this information gap. They have been produced by three groups working closely together: the Working with Cancer (WwC) group, Cancerbackup, and the CIPD.

The WwC group was established in 2005 by four working women who had all recently had cancer. They wanted to find out if their perception that there was a need for such guidance was well-founded.

Cancerbackup, the UK's leading cancer information charity, carried out a survey of users of their telephone support line between August 2004 and January 2005 to find out a wide range of information on their users' experiences of cancer and work. The responses indicated that there was a real information gap around working with cancer.

In the spring of 2006, WwC, Cancerbackup and the CIPD designed a survey specifically to determine how far workplace employment policies were meeting the needs of those affected by cancer. The online survey was circulated to the CIPD membership, and the responses indicated a very high demand for both policies and information that could be used in the workplace by employers, employees, co-workers and carers.

A summary of the results is available in Appendix B. The full results of the survey can be viewed in detail at www.cipd.co.uk/surveys

Why should you use these guidelines?

The guidelines for employers are the first of a series proposed to offer help and guidance for the different groups affected by cancer at work. It's part of a process of acknowledging that many of us in the workplace will be touched by cancer, either directly or indirectly, and that we all have a part to play in working with it and through it.

While the guidelines have been written to address the needs of those affected by cancer, they can be applied to any employee diagnosed with a critical, life-threatening or terminal illness.

All organisations should have a critical illness policy, and the guidelines should reflect the principles of that policy. An organisation that is perceived to have fair employment policies and practices is far more attractive to potential employees than those that don't have them, even if they may not be the highest-paying organisation in the marketplace. Reputations, whether good or bad, get quickly established and it's harder to redeem a bad reputation than to get it right in the first place.

The way an organisation responds to the needs of employees affected by cancer or other critical illnesses will have a huge impact, both on employee morale and on how attractive an organisation appears to potential employees. Appendix A gives an example of a cancer policy, which could also be adapted for more general use as a critical illness policy. Any policy should act as a framework for all concerned and, reflecting the key principles below, should:

- respect the employee's dignity and privacy
- maintain employee involvement and engagement
- ensure the employee suffers no financial detriment
- continue to provide employment benefits
- adopt a flexible approach
- continue to provide access to development opportunities
- provide the employee with information and support
- support the team affected by the employee's situation.

Cancer and working: guidelines for employers, HR and line managers

Being diagnosed with cancer can be one of the most difficult situations that anyone has to face. It can cause great fear and worry, and can affect every aspect of a person's life, including their ability to work. Many cancers can be cured these days; however, the tests and treatments for cancer may mean spending some time in hospital. Treatments may include surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, or other drugs that can cause unpleasant side effects. The symptoms of cancer or the side effects of treatment may reduce a person's ability to work as effectively as before their illness. For some people this will be temporary, but others may need to make changes to their work or give up work permanently.

People have different views about work. For some, work is the centre of their lives, and they would feel lost without it. For other people, it's just a means to an end – something they would gladly give up if they could. So, for some people cancer and its treatment will be a challenge; something to get through so they can get back to their normal life, and work. For others, it will be an opportunity to rethink their lives and possibly retire, or take early retirement.

It therefore follows that employers should, as far as possible, encourage an open environment where employees who are affected by cancer can raise their concerns without feeling threatened or stigmatised. The existence of a published cancer and working policy, of which employees are made aware, is seen as a step towards achieving that end, and a template policy can be found in Appendix A.

What is cancer?

The organs and tissues of the body are made up of tiny building blocks called cells. Cancer* is a disease of these cells. It's important to realise that cancer is not a single disease with a single cause and a single type of treatment. There are more than 200 different types of cancer, each with its own name and treatment.

Some causes or risk factors of cancer are known, but in many instances we simply don't yet have scientific evidence to know what causes a particular cancer. However, it's important that individuals who have been diagnosed don't blame themselves.

The aim of cancer treatment for many people is to cure the cancer. In some cancers that are very slow growing, or that have spread beyond their original area of the body, the aim may be to control the cancer and delay its progress, sometimes for many years.

As a manager, you may find it helpful to know more about cancer and its symptoms, as well as the possible treatments and their side effects. You can find more information at www.cancerbackup.org.uk

* Throughout this guide the word cancer is used to describe all forms of cancer, including lymphoma, leukaemia and myeloma.

First steps: meet with the employee

As soon as an employer becomes aware that an employee has been diagnosed with, or is affected by cancer, the employee should be encouraged to have a confidential and supportive discussion with their line manager, HR manager or occupational health manager (as appropriate within the particular organisation). You should remember that an employee may be a close relative of someone diagnosed with cancer, or their main carer.

The company's policy should detail the options available to the employee in respect of who they first approach, given that the 'one size fits all' approach will not suit all organisations or all employees affected by the diagnosis. Exposure to cancer is a very personal experience that can turn people's lives upside down, so flexibility in allowing affected employees to tell the news in their own way is important in developing trust and supporting respect and dignity.

The employee may wish to have a third party present at the meeting, such as a colleague, friend, employee or trade union representative, but the need to respect employee privacy is essential. This also applies to all subsequent work discussions. Notes should be made of the meeting, and these should be available to all parties but not shared beyond those participants without the prior agreement of the employee.

The discussion with the employee should be empathetic and cover some or all of the following.

The employee's reaction:

- the employee's emotional reaction to their own, or their family member's/ dependant's diagnosis.

Who knows, who they would like to know, who needs to know:

- whether, and how, they would like other managers (line, senior, associated and so on) and colleagues to be told about their situation
- what they would like to be said
- permission from the employee to approach and obtain advice from their doctor about their condition, and any recommendations that might relate to work.

The likely impact of possible cancer treatment:

- on their work and/or ability to attend work
- any resulting need for time off
- what constitutes reasonable time off to attend medical appointments
- whether the employee needs to take sickness absence, emergency leave, or holiday
- whether a reduction in working hours, or a change to flexible working, might be appropriate.

The employee should be provided with the company's information on:

- flexible working/work adjustment policies
- their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act (see Part 8)
- return-to-work policies
- any employee assistance programme
- any private medical insurance (PMI)
- any occupational health services
- any counselling services
- support if the cancer causes disability.

Note: Building on Cancerbackup's research into the inadequate provision of PMI, Cancerbackup and the WwC group, are working together on developing guidelines for purchasing PMI.

How absence from work may affect them financially, including:

- the company's sick leave and sick pay policies
- any critical illness/long-term disability or permanent health insurance plans that the company may have in place for which the employee may be eligible
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)
- company pension and life assurance schemes where an employee may not be returning to work
- employee incentive schemes (bonuses, stock options and so on).

The Disability Discrimination Act requires that employees affected by cancer should have reasonable work performance targets, adjusted to reflect their illness, and that eligibility for and participation in incentive schemes should not be discriminatory

- reference to the fact that other statutory benefits may apply over time.

(Note: the Cancerbackup Freephone Helpline (0808 800 1234 Monday-Friday, 9:00-20:00) can point people in the right direction for information on statutory benefits.)

It's important to remember that not all companies will offer the same benefits; however, all companies need to give their employees information on their statutory rights, and be able to direct them to further sources of information.

The employees should also be told about other sources of information and support outside the organisation, concerning:

- relevant statutory benefits
- how to talk about cancer to their colleagues (this information should come from a trained occupational health manager or a reputable, independent source such as Cancerbackup)
- other specialist organisations and charity websites and helplines (as appropriate)
- counselling (as appropriate).

At this early stage the employer has to strike a balance between:

- work and time off: cancer treatment does not always exactly follow the original plan; plans will need constant fine-tuning, as more facts become known and as treatment progresses.
- company procedures (where they exist) and employee needs: where appropriate procedures are not in place, a manager may be concerned about setting a precedent, and find the situation difficult. If procedures exist but are too rigid, they may need some flexibility in their interpretation. HR should also be aware of any other similar situations that may have arisen within the organisation and how they were handled, including flexible working, compensation, time off, emergency leave and so on.
- too little and too much communication.

The employer should also consider the impact of the employee's absence on the rest of the team, and balance the team's workloads accordingly.

Try to remember that each individual is unique and requires individualised treatment.

After the first steps meeting

Notes from the first meeting should be made available to all parties, but not shared beyond those participants without the prior agreement of the employee. It's important to respect the employee's right to privacy; if they don't want colleagues to be told about their cancer or carer role, the employer should respect this, as should anyone else who has been involved in the discussion.

You should hold another meeting to discuss and agree the points raised in the first. Thereafter, regular reviews should be arranged to monitor the working arrangements, and to ensure that sufficient support is being offered. Modifications should be agreed as and when necessary and/or appropriate. The following issues should be discussed and agreed:

- The employee should know who to contact if their situation suddenly changes.
- If the employee plans to work through some or all of their treatment, or while they are offering support to a family member or care dependant, they should be helped to do so by their employer by reasonable adjustments being made to their working hours, workplace or workload. Occupational health and HR managers should be able to discuss these issues and work with the line managers to help provide solutions.
- If the employee would like someone else to tell their work colleagues about their cancer, employers should arrange for this to be carried out in a sensitive manner by someone who has a good understanding of cancer and the effects of treatment and who is able to deal with the reactions of those being told.
- Employers should ensure that cancer information and support provided to employees from minority ethnic communities is culturally appropriate. It may be of help to direct employees to additional services, such as Cancerbackup.

During treatment: maintaining employee involvement and engagement

Depending on the nature of the cancer and the proposed treatment, some people like to continue working during their treatment and any subsequent recovery period, either on a full- or part-time basis. This may enable people to feel that they are maintaining some control over their lives at a time when cancer is affecting many things in their own environment; it may help prevent feelings of isolation or exclusion and it may reduce economic hardship too.

It's often difficult to know exactly how an individual will be affected by their treatment for cancer, and managers need to understand the importance of flexibility as plans may need to change, sometimes at short notice.

Points to consider should include:

- planning a reduced or more flexible work schedule, for example changing the hours of work to avoid rush hour travel or allowing a short rest break from time to time
- arranging for 'light duties' for a period of time
- temporarily reallocating some work within their team, and asking colleagues to be supportive
- adjusting performance targets to allow for the effects of fatigue, sick leave and so on
- working from home

(Note: if an employee decides or needs to stay at home for the majority of time, or to work from home on either a full- or part-time basis, line managers and HR should be involved in discussing and agreeing the feasibility of this, and what support (such as IT) needs to be in place)

- keeping in touch while the employee is on sick leave (Note: if an employee has to take sick leave for cancer treatment, their employer should ask them if they would like their colleagues to stay in touch with them and if they would like to be kept up to date on work matters. If the answer is 'yes' then how frequent would they like that contact to be?)
- arranging for a colleague to be a work 'buddy' who will take responsibility for keeping an employee up to date with key developments during any temporary or extended absences for treatment or illness
- scheduling regular consultations between the employee and line manager to discuss work issues.

Any of the above should happen only after full consultation with the employee concerned. Managers should be aware that employees with cancer may experience varying levels of fatigue (sometimes extreme) and other side effects both during and following treatment, and that adjustments should be reviewed regularly. For more information on the side effects of specific treatments, go to www.cancerbackup.org.uk

Employers should also be aware that physical and emotional side effects from cancer and treatment can last for some time (weeks and, for some people, years) beyond the end of treatment. They should also be aware that the end of the treatment is often an extremely emotionally stressful period for employees who choose to return to work at this time.

Returning to work

Many people choose not to work during their treatment. Going back to work after a break of a few weeks or months can be a very difficult time for an individual. Some may be able to return to their old job, but feel very nervous about it. It's common for people to feel awkward and to wonder if they'll still be able to do their job. However, for some people going back to work can be a sign that the cancer is over and that they can get back to a normal life again.

Employees who are returning to work after cancer treatment should be involved in planning their return to work. Carry out a return-to-work interview: welcome them back to work and give them an opportunity to discuss their health and any concerns they may have, either in private or with an employee representative present. This can be a good opportunity to discuss any health and safety issues that may need to be addressed.

Employers should discuss with their employee any reasonable adjustments they would prefer when they return to work. These might include some of the following:

- a phased return within an agreed timetable
- a change to working hours or reduced working hours
- a change to work patterns
- changes to their role, whether temporary or otherwise
- partial homeworking
- telephone conferences to reduce travel
- help with transport to or from work
- making alterations to premises or a workstation
- reviewing any impact to the terms and conditions of their job
- considering any training or refresher courses they may need
- scheduling dates when the plan will be reviewed.

The above mirrors advice given to employers for rehabilitation after all long-term illnesses.

Disability caused by cancer

If an employee suffers a temporary or permanent disability as a result of cancer or cancer treatment, and this affects their return to work, the employer should work with them to make reasonable adjustments to continue in work. You may offer a long-term disability or permanent health insurance benefit scheme, for which an employee may be eligible – in which case, they should be made aware of such a scheme, and steps should be taken to help them apply for this benefit. Alternatively, your employee may be eligible for help from Access to Work, a scheme which is run by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Access to Work carries out an assessment of the needs of the disabled person at work and produces a report for the employer that recommends any changes that the employer needs to make. Access to Work also reimburses employers of disabled people with up to 80% of the cost of any special help that an employee needs because of their disability. The scheme supports part- or full-time employees or people who are self-employed. Under certain circumstances, an employee who works from home (but is not self-employed) will also be considered for support through the scheme.

Access to Work can give employers financial help. This can include money for:

- adaptations to premises and equipment (for example, a ramp for a wheelchair or upgrades to computer equipment)
- the cost of an interpreter or communicator to give support at an interview (for example, a sign language interpreter for a deaf person)
- one-off aids or items of support (for example, retraining costs for an employee who is at risk of losing their job because of disability)
- a personal reader for people with visual disability
- special aids and equipment (for example, an item the employee may need to do their job which would not be needed by a fit person)
- a support worker to give practical help at work or with the journey to and from work (for example, a teacher who may need help to set up a classroom but not with teaching)
- travel to work (for example, the extra cost of travelling if the employee is unable to use public transport, or help with the cost of adapting a car).

If the employee fits the criteria and is eligible for the scheme, Access to Work will pay up to 80% of the approved costs for many of the elements. However, if an application to the scheme is made more than six weeks after the person has started the job, an employer, or someone who is self-employed, has to pay a proportion of the cost of special equipment and adaptations to premises.

Giving up work after cancer

Some people want to consider or choose giving up work completely when they are diagnosed with cancer. This may allow them to focus on treatment or may be as a result of a reassessment of their lives. If work has been a major focus of someone's life this can be a significant decision and adjustment, and it may be advisable for them to be encouraged to seek counselling before taking irrevocable decisions.

Similarly, there are financial implications to giving up paid employment, and employees should be encouraged to examine these aspects seriously. In certain circumstances an employee may be entitled to receive a company, or ill-health, or early retirement pension.

While such financial decisions are personal to an employee, they should be encouraged to take proper advice before making the decision to leave paid work, either temporarily or permanently.

Death from cancer

Although the number of people who survive cancer is increasing in the UK, it's possible that an employee, or a close family member of an employee, could die from their cancer. This may have an effect upon a number of people in the work team, including colleagues and managers, and a number of things will need to be considered.

Prior to death or bereavement

An employee who is diagnosed as terminally ill is likely to worry about how those they leave behind are going to cope, both emotionally and financially. They may need advice about putting their affairs in order, such as writing a will, arranging power of attorney if appropriate, and any pension and death payments that may apply. They are likely to experience a range of emotions, such as depression and anger; where possible, counselling should be offered, or they should be referred to an appropriate support agency (see Appendix D).

Some people dying with cancer choose to remain at work for as long as possible. If they are gradually getting weaker, this can be difficult to manage, in a practical sense. Colleagues and managers may also find it distressing.

An employee that has a family member that is dying may need to take extra time off to spend with their relative. This may require additional flexibility and compassionate leave. It can be helpful to discuss with the employee how they would like you to communicate with them during this time.

Following a death

When an employee has died it's important to contact the family as soon as possible to offer condolences. At some point you may need to discuss returning any company property, such as a car or computer, although it's important to act with sensitivity and probably wait several weeks before doing this. The employee's colleagues may need emotional support and counselling after the death, and it can be helpful to offer a counsellor-facilitated group session as well as individual support. You need to consider if colleagues can have time off to attend the funeral, and how they would like to pay their respects, for example by sending flowers or making a donation to charity.

When the family member of an employee has died, the employee will often need extra time off to make funeral arrangements and to sort out the affairs, such as dealing with the will, probate and organising childcare. Employers should clarify with the employee whether, and how, they would like the news of the death of a family member or loved one to be communicated to their work colleagues. The employee may need grief counselling or emotional support and it may help to direct them to services such as Cruse or Compassionate Friends (see Appendix D).

Legal aspects, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

DDA

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person because of their disability. Everyone with cancer is classed as disabled under the DDA and so is protected by this Act.

The DDA states that 'a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The DDA covers workers who were disabled in the past, even if they are no longer disabled. For example, a worker who had a cancer in the past, which has been successfully treated and is now 'cured', will still be covered by the DDA, even though they no longer appear to be disabled. So, their employer must not discriminate against them for a reason relating to their past cancer.

The employer has a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to workplaces and working practices to make sure that people with a disability are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with other people. What is considered 'reasonable adjustment' will depend on many different things, including:

- the cost of making the adjustment
- the amount of benefit for the employee
- the practicality of making the adjustment
- whether making the adjustment will affect the employer's business, service or financial situation.

The DDA covers people living with, and in remission from, cancer, from the point of diagnosis onwards, and covers nearly all aspects of the employment cycle from recruitment; the terms and conditions of employment; opportunities for promotion, transfer, training and benefits; unfair dismissal; unfair treatment compared with other workers; and harassment and victimisation. The DDA also covers

employment benefits, including health insurance, concessions, canteens, and so on.

Primary carers

Primary carers have the right to 'reasonable' time off for emergency leave within this legislation, which may be paid or unpaid at the company's discretion. Where a dependant is critically ill, family leave may be taken in the following circumstances:

- to make emergency or longer-term care arrangements
- to deal with the death of a dependant
- to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements with a dependant.

If an employee is the parent of a child who is critically ill they may be entitled to up to 18 weeks' parental leave to look after their child. This leave may be paid at the company's discretion, and/or the company may allow a longer period of leave depending on the individual circumstances.

Raising a grievance

Best practice should encourage employees to approach their line manager or HR department if any issues arise that cause them concern and need resolution. However, employers should make sure that their employees are aware of the existence of a company grievance procedure that employees can use (with an employee representative if appropriate) should they have an issue that they feel needs formal resolution. An example could be where an employee feels excluded from having access to training and development opportunities because of their cancer.

For more information about the Disability Discrimination Act, see the Office of Public Sector Information website - www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/20050013.htm

Conclusion

Cancer in the workplace is a very personal issue for those affected by it, whether the employee, the employee's managers, colleagues and co-workers, or a carer. At a time of uncertainty and conflicting emotions, to have some clear guidelines to work within offers a standard approach to an issue that is not standard, while allowing flexibility to accommodate the differences.

This guide has been written to offer such guidelines for employers to consider adopting in part or in full, within their own corporate ethos.

Appendix A

Cancer policy template

What follows is a template for a cancer policy designed to support employees who are diagnosed with cancer, but it could easily be adapted for more general use as a critical illness policy. It also covers the company's approach to employees who have a family member

(parent, spouse, partner, child or sibling) diagnosed with cancer and/or who become carers for someone diagnosed with an illness of this nature.

You are invited to copy and amend the policy template between pages 17–21 to reflect the particular style and policies of your own organisation.

We suggest the following structure:

| | |
|--|---|
| Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what the policy is about and who is covered by it• why the company has such a policy – its commitment to the employees |
| <hr/> | |
| Employee diagnosed with cancer | |
| 1 Scope of the policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who is covered |
| 2 On diagnosis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• outline of company private medical care scheme (as applicable in your organisation)• telling your line manager and HR• telling work colleagues and clients• payment of salary during sickness absence• counselling and support (as applicable in your organisation) |
| 3 Working during treatment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• planning how and where this will take place• time off during work for treatment |
| 4 Time off during treatment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extended period of absence• staying in touch |
| 5 After treatment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extended period of absence• staying in touch |
| 6 Disability caused by cancer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• impact on return to work• reasonable adjustments to work schedule and place |
| 7 Giving up work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether early retirement is an option |
| 8 Unfair treatment | |
| <hr/> | |
| Carers or family members affected by cancer | |
| 1 Scope of the policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who is covered |
| 2 On diagnosis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• outline of company private medical care scheme (as applicable in your organisation)• telling your line manager and HR |
| 3 Impact on work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• family and parental leave |

Cancer policy

Introduction

The company believes it has a clear responsibility to provide help and support to any of its employees who are affected in some way by the diagnosis of cancer.

This policy is designed to support employees who are diagnosed with cancer. It also covers the company's approach to employees who have a family member (parent, spouse, partner, child or sibling) diagnosed cancer and/or who become carers for someone diagnosed with cancer.

The company will do all it can to support you. This policy is based on the following principles, which will inform a framework for all concerned.

1 Respect the employee's dignity and privacy

The organisation should respect the privacy of any employee affected directly or indirectly, via close family or friends, by cancer. No sensitive information of any kind should therefore be shared with anyone without the employee giving prior consent.

2 Maintain employee involvement and engagement

The organisation should make every effort to communicate with the employee during any absence from work, and reassure the employee that they have continuous employment in the same, or a comparable, position.

3 Ensure the employee suffers no financial detriment

To the best of its ability the organisation should ensure that an individual's compensation – salary and benefits – are maintained and increased as laid down by HR policy, as if the employee were not affected by cancer.

4 Continue to provide employment benefits

The organisation should work with the employee to ease the stress of any issues in relation to insured benefits offered by the organisation, such as private health cover or permanent health insurance cover/long-term disability insurance.

5 Adopt a flexible approach

Managers should work to structure the employee's work schedule and workload in such a way that gives the employee maximum flexibility to manage their medical treatment and related needs, while maintaining effectiveness and efficiency at work.

6 Continue to provide access to development opportunities

The employee should continue to have access to appropriate professional development opportunities, subject to their availability to attend.

7 Provide the employee with information and support

The organisation should make every effort to link the employee with available resources that will enable access to cancer information and support about, among other things, treatment, absence from work, as well as successful reintegration into work. They should direct employees to sources of financial and, if needed, legal advice. The organisation should also make these resources and information available to family members and friends as well as work colleagues, where appropriate.

8 Support the team affected by the employee's situation

Managers should remain sensitive to the impact on co-workers and provide practical support where necessary.

Employees diagnosed with cancer

1 Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all permanent employees (full-time and part-time) of the company. The company believes it has a responsibility to support employees affected by cancer and will be as flexible as possible in its approach, bearing in mind each individual's personal circumstances and the needs of the business.

2 On diagnosis

Private medical care scheme

The company's medical care scheme is administered by [XXX] and is a non-contributory healthcare arrangement that all permanent employees (full-time and part-time) are eligible to join.

The scheme is extensive in its coverage and, in addition, the company may, on an individual basis, cover costs incurred that are over and above the scheme rules. Full details of the scheme are available from the HR department.

If, as a result of a consultation with your GP, you are referred for further advice or treatment, you must contact [XXX] before treatment for pre-authorisation of eligibility and cover.

Telling your line manager and HR

Once you're clear about the nature of your cancer and any impact it will have on your work, you should advise your line manager. If you feel unable to discuss this with your line manager, you can speak to your HR department instead. Although this may not be easy for you, it's difficult for your manager, and therefore the company, to support you if we are unaware of your circumstances. Practically, it's also difficult to attend treatment, take time off to meet your own health needs or ensure that your work is covered, without your manager knowing the reason why, and what is involved.

If you wish to have an employee representative with you at any time during discussions with your line manager or HR, you may do so.

Once you tell your manager, they will need your permission to share that information with HR and any other managers who may be affected. Equally, you may prefer to tell them yourself. If so, you should do this as

soon as you can so that the company can quickly take the appropriate steps to help you.

We are aware that in some circumstances an individual may not know how ill they are until they have begun treatment, or had some form of surgical investigation, and there may be a need to take time off at very short notice.

As soon as it's possible and appropriate to do so, HR or your line manager will discuss with you:

- your need to take time off to come to terms with the immediate diagnosis
- the likely impact of treatment on your work and whether you would like colleagues and clients to be told about this
- your permission to obtain written advice from your doctor about your illness and recommendations for returning to work and time off.

You will be offered information on:

- the company's sick leave and sick pay policies
- the company's critical illness policy
- relevant company benefits
- counselling and other support services
- flexible working and work adjustment policies
- other sources of information and support.

Telling your work colleagues and clients

The company respects its employees' wish for privacy and confidentiality concerning their personal circumstances.

At the same time, the company will need to make arrangements to cover sickness absence effectively.

HR and your line manager will agree with you from the outset what (if anything) to tell your colleagues at work (both orally and in writing), and if you want your colleagues to know about your illness but cannot tell them yourself. This will also apply to clients and other third parties.

Payment of salary during sickness absence

Our intent is to ensure that employees should suffer no financial hardship as a result of a cancer.

At the company's discretion, salary payments may be continued during a lengthy period of absence. If you have any concerns about this or your financial position

as a result of your cancer, you should discuss this immediately with your HR adviser or representative.

Remember to ask your GP for a medical certificate to cover any periods of absence, and to send them to your line manager or HR department as soon as possible.

Counselling and support (as applicable within your company)

All employees and their dependants have access to a 24-hour, confidential and free telephone helpline service for counselling. This service is strictly private and confidential and there is no individual feedback to the company. The helpline number is [XXX].

In addition to this, there's also a support network in the company to provide advice and guidance to employees affected by cancer or other critical illnesses. Please contact your HR department for further information.

3 Working during treatment

Depending on your illness, you may wish to carry on working during your treatment, either full-time or part-time. Before treatment, it's often difficult to know exactly how the treatment may affect you, and it's helpful to let your manager know this so that they're aware you may need to change your work plans at short notice.

If you decide you want to remain at home for the majority of the time and work from there, either on a full-time or part-time basis, you should discuss this with your line manager and HR, so they can consider the feasibility of this and arrange for technological support to be provided.

In summary, we can help you by:

- planning a reduced or more flexible schedule, for example changing your hours so that you can travel to and from work at less busy times (outside the rush hour)
- arranging for you to undertake 'light duties' for a period
- asking colleagues to be supportive and to help with some of your work
- allowing you to take a short break every now and again to rest
- allowing you to work from home, if possible.

Equally, you may decide that you cannot continue to work but that you just want to keep in touch with what's happening. Again, we can make arrangements for this.

4 Time off for treatment

If you decide to return to work either during or after treatment you may need to take time off for medical appointments and follow-up procedures. When it's necessary to do this during working hours, you should, as far as possible, let your line manager know in advance so that any cover arrangements can be made.

Extended period of absence

If you need to take an extended period of absence, this time off will be treated as sickness absence. You might find you need to take a few days or weeks off. This may be as one period of sick time, or could be a few days every month for a period of time.

This period of extended absence may qualify you for insured benefits under any permanent health insurance cover/long-term disability insurance that may be in place. Your HR department will be able to discuss the eligibility requirements and applicability of this scheme to your case and help you with an application where appropriate.

Keeping in touch

In the case of an extended period of absence, your HR department or line manager will ask you if you would like your colleagues to keep in contact with you to keep you up to date on work matters, and, if so, how frequent you would like that contact to be. We'll also provide the option of having regular discussions by phone or in person to review how your absence is being managed.

5 After treatment

Returning to work

After your treatment has finished, and if you have not been working during this period, you'll need to decide whether you want to return to work and, if so, whether this will be on a full-time or part-time basis. Clearly this will depend on your prognosis as well as your personal circumstances and wishes. Very often a diagnosis of cancer will lead individuals to rethink their lifestyle and their priorities. Some choose not to return to work, others want to resume their everyday lives, including their working lives.

We are aware that returning to work after a long period away can be physically and emotionally stressful. We'll provide whatever support we can to assist individuals at this stage in their recovery.

Meeting your line manager and HR to discuss options

Coming back to work after a break of a few weeks or months can be difficult to adjust to, and you should take the time to think about what's right for you. If you're still coping with some of the effects of treatment, you should discuss any changes that can be made to your work to help you.

Before coming back to work we'll arrange a 'return to work' interview where you, your manager and HR can discuss the options for making the transition back to work. Options you might want or need to consider, which the company will do all it reasonably can to accommodate, are:

- making a 'phased return' to work within a fixed timescale, where you increase your hours gradually over a period of time
- working from home (at least to begin with) for one day a week or more
- working flexible or reduced hours
- changing your role or some of your responsibilities for a temporary period
- telephone conferences to reduce the need to travel
- help with transport to and from work
- making alterations to your physical location or workstation.

Don't be over-optimistic about what you can manage at the outset.

6 Disability caused by critical illness

If your illness causes disability that affects your return to work, the company will make reasonable adjustments to enable you to continue to work.

In certain circumstances you may be eligible to receive a discretionary ill-health early retirement pension (see below).

7 Giving up work

Is early retirement an option?

Some people choose to give up work completely when they're diagnosed with cancer. This allows them to focus on their illness and its treatment and to reassess their lives. If work has been a major focus of your life,

it can be difficult to adjust to not working. You may want to seek counselling about this to talk this through (see above).

If a prognosis is given that means that the cancer is likely to be terminal, you may decide that you're unable to continue to attend work. However, it might not be wise for you to formally retire, as death and pension payments attached to your employment may be important to the welfare of your family or dependents. Remember that you cannot choose to retire early (on an enhanced pension) if you're medically fit to work.

If, having considered your options, you decide that you want to take early retirement on health grounds, or for personal reasons, it's essential that you take appropriate advice.

Consider your own circumstances carefully, taking your health into consideration, as well as your finances, before deciding what to do.

7 Unfair treatment

If you feel that you've been treated unfairly as a result of your illness, you should raise this with your line manager and/or HR, who will try to resolve the problem informally.

If you're unable to resolve the issue, it will be considered under the company's grievance procedure.

Carers or family members affected by cancer

1 Scope of the policy

If you're a partner or family member of someone who has cancer, you may need to take time off work to look after them or deal with issues arising from their condition.

The company believes it has a responsibility to support employees affected in this way and will be as flexible as possible in its approach, bearing in mind each individual's personal circumstances and the needs of the business.

2 On diagnosis

Private medical care scheme

The company's medical care scheme is administered by [XXX] and is a non-contributory healthcare arrangement that all permanent employees (full-time and part-time) are eligible to join.

The scheme is extensive in its coverage and, in addition, the company may, on an individual basis, cover costs incurred that are over and above the scheme rules. Full details of the scheme are available from the HR department and you should check with HR to confirm whether or not the person you are caring for is covered under the scheme.

If, as a result of a consultation with a GP, the person you are caring for is referred for further advice or treatment, you must contact [XXX] before treatment for pre-authorisation of eligibility and cover.

Telling your line manager and HR

Once you're clear about the nature of the illness and its potential impact on your work and family life, you should tell your line manager about your circumstances. Although this may not be easy for you to discuss, it's difficult for your manager, and therefore the company, to support you if we're unaware of your circumstances. Practically, it's also difficult for you to take time off to support your partner or family member without your manager knowing the reason why, and what's involved.

Once you disclose your situation to your manager, they will need your permission to share that information with HR and any other managers who may be affected by your absence. Equally, you may prefer to tell them yourself. If so, you should do this as soon as you can so that the company can quickly take the appropriate steps to help you.

The kind of help we can give you is:

- planning a reduced or more flexible working schedule
- allowing emergency leave
- asking colleagues to be supportive and to help with some of your work
- allowing you to work from home, if possible.

Telling your work colleagues and clients

The company respects its employees' wish for privacy and confidentiality concerning their personal circumstances. At the same time, the company will need to make arrangements for any absence arising from the situation.

HR and your line manager will agree with you from the outset what, if anything (both orally and in writing), to tell your colleagues at work. This will also apply to clients and other third parties.

Counselling and support (as applicable within your organisation)

All employees and their dependants have access to a 24-hour, confidential and free telephone helpline service for counselling. This service is strictly private and confidential and there is no individual feedback to the company. The helpline number is [XXX].

In addition, there's also a support network in the company to provide advice and guidance to employees affected by cancer or other critical illnesses. Please contact your HR department for further information.

3 Impact on work

Family and parental leave

You're entitled to reasonable time off to make necessary arrangements to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem concerning a dependant. This leave may be paid or unpaid, depending on the circumstances (in most cases the company will pay for this leave unless there is a clear reason not to do so).

Dependants are defined as your parents, spouse, partner, children or someone who lives as part of the family.

Where a dependant is critically ill, family leave may be taken in the following circumstances:

- to make emergency or longer-term care arrangements
- to deal with the death of a dependant (your own company policy should be inserted here, for instance: any time off required in excess of the five days' paid leave allowed under compassionate leave – see below)
- to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements with a dependant.

Parental leave

If you're the parent of a child who is critically ill, you will be entitled to up to 18 weeks' parental leave to look after your child. This leave may be paid at the company's discretion, or the company may allow you a longer period of leave depending on your individual circumstances.

(End of policy)

Appendix B

Working with Cancer Survey: Summary of key findings

A recent survey of employers, which was the result of a partnership between the Working with Cancer group, the patient information charity Cancerbackup, and the CIPD, explored how organisations are currently handling the challenge of managing individuals who are affected by cancer.

The survey analysis is based on replies from 219 organisations employing a total of more than 800,000 employees.

- The vast majority of employers (73%) don't have a formal policy in place for managing employees affected by cancer.
- Nearly 80% of respondents know that the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) now classes cancer as a disability. However, worryingly, more than 20% of employers are not aware of this.
- Only a third of organisations ensure that relevant staff have a good understanding of cancer and the impact of treatment on an individual in the workplace.
- Just under half of organisations surveyed provide support to members of staff who are dealing with employees affected by cancer.
- Just 14% of organisations formally track the incidence of cancer in the workplace.
- Under a third of organisations track whether employees who have or have had cancer return to work after treatment.
- Many organisations place little emphasis on the provision of information and support for employees affected by cancer. More than 40% of respondents said that their organisation doesn't provide any information or support to employees with cancer, and 36% said they don't know whether it does or not.
- Only just over a third of organisations provide or pay for counselling services or other sources of emotional and practical support for employees affected by cancer, both during and following cancer. A further 15% of organisations provide such support, but respondents say they are unsure whether this happens during or following treatment.
- Nearly half of employers purchase private medical insurance for at least some categories of employees.
- Of those organisations that purchase private medical insurance cover, only a small minority (9%) specifically assess the suitability of their cancer-related cover.

Appendix C

Case studies

These case studies have been included to give examples of how three different organisations manage employees affected by cancer. They illustrate different approaches, incorporating various elements of good practice, but they all demonstrate the importance of understanding

that employees affected by cancer must be treated as individuals, with the support and advice provided tailored whenever possible to their particular needs and circumstances.

LCC UK

All employees at wireless and telecommunications firm LCC UK have the reassurance of knowing that should they develop cancer, they are covered by the organisation's permanent health insurance (PHI).

Employees with serious health problems benefit from occupational sick pay at full pay for six months and if they have still not returned to work at that point their salary is then provided by the firm's PHI scheme.

The firm's HR manager, Pamela Longcroft, said that this benefit ensured individuals are able to concentrate on getting better and returning to work at their own pace without worrying about financial pressures.

LCC has a general absence management policy that covers long-term or serious health problems and aspects like phased return to work, and that also refers to the PHI scheme.

The company has a policy on disability, and although this does not specifically refer to cancer, the employee handbook emphasises that cancer is covered under the Disability Discrimination Act.

HR is usually the first point of contact for individuals affected by cancer. They will then be asked if they are happy for their line manager to know about the nature of their illness on a confidential basis.

Ms Longcroft said she is responsible for talking to individuals' line managers to ensure that they understand the situation and help them respond in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

If a member of staff is affected by cancer, the company, which employs 75 people, would rely on advice from the individual's consultant on the appropriate return-to-work strategy, provided the employee was happy with this.

The firm has also taken advice from a representative from its PHI provider about extending the duration of an individual's return-to-work plan.

West Mercia Constabulary

West Mercia Constabulary does not have a specific policy on managing cancer in the workplace, but it does provide a wide range of support and information to help individuals affected by the illness.

There is guidance on the Disability Discrimination Act that emphasises that cancer is now covered by the legislation, and the organisation's policy on managing sickness absence also refers to the condition.

Amanda Blower, the forces personnel equality and diversity manager, said that anyone with cancer or another serious illness would be automatically offered the assistance of the occupational health department.

The occupational health staff will also liaise with the line manager of the individual who is affected by cancer to help them understand how they can best support them. In addition there are welfare officers available to talk to and support individuals affected by critical illness, and who can also refer people to external counsellors.

Miss Blower said that the organisation does not formally track the incidence of cancer within the workplace but is looking to improve the information that is available in this area. It is about to survey employees as part of its new disability equality scheme in order to help monitor disability in the workplace – including critical illness such as cancer – more effectively.

Although the force does not have a formal system of tracking the incidence of cancer in the workplace, individual cases are monitored through a system of monthly meetings on long-term absence. Divisional and departmental meetings are held to discuss long-term sickness absence cases and these then inform a senior-level meeting involving the deputy chief constable and the constabulary's head of personnel. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the state of health of individuals affected by cancer and whether they are receiving the support that they need.

Miss Blower said the organisation provides a number of options through recuperative and restrictive duties to wherever possible allow employees to remain in work or return to work as soon as possible, either while they are undergoing treatment or following their recovery. Employees affected by cancer can benefit from different duties, working patterns or working hours.

West Mercia Constabulary's occupational sick pay scheme provides six months' full pay and six months' half pay for police officers. Other police staff accumulate sick pay benefits, starting with one month's full pay and two months' half pay, and building to the same level as police officers after five years' service. Blower said that there was some flexibility over sick pay available to employees suffering from critical illnesses on a case-by-case basis.

Fenner Dunlop

Hull-based manufacturing company Fenner Dunlop relies on its HR function to ensure that individuals affected by cancer receive the appropriate level of information and support.

The firm, which employs 130 people, has an absence management policy that covers long-term and serious health problems rather than a specific policy on cancer or critical illness.

HR manager Diane Quigley said that because of her organisation's size she did not think that having a specific policy on cancer was necessary because she can ensure that employees affected by cancer receive the right level of advice and support.

'However I can see the benefits in a larger organisation of having a policy to make sure different areas of the business manage people affected by cancer at work in a consistent way,' Quigley added.

She believes that establishing the best way of maintaining contact with employees affected by cancer is critical to ensuring individuals feel supported rather than pressured by their employer.

'Different people want different things. It is a fine line to tread sometimes. Some people will feel if you ring them up regularly that you are just trying to get them back to work, which is obviously not the case with an illness like this, while others feel like they are being left high and dry with the same level of contact – it is a judgement call depending on the individual and their circumstances,' said Quigley.

'If someone has a spouse and supportive family they may not need or want the same level of contact as someone who perhaps does not have such a strong support network.'

The company provides occupational sick pay up to a maximum of 40 weeks. This can be extended on a discretionary basis if the individual is in sight of a return to work.

The firm contracts an outside GP practice to provide occupational health support when it is required.

Quigley said that when it comes to serious conditions like cancer, the company liaises with individuals and typically relies on advice provided by their GP regarding adjustments, such as a gradual return to work where this is needed.

'We treat each case on its merits and try to do what is appropriate for the individual,' she added.

The firm provides as much flexibility as possible over hours and, depending on the job role, through work adjustments.

Information on the company's absence management policy and procedures is available to office-based workers on the company computer network's shared server, while hard copies of the firm's absence management policy are distributed to shop-floor workers.

Appendix D

Information sources

Cancerbackup

3 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London EC2A 3JR
Freephone helpline: 0808 800 1234 (9:00–20:00,
Monday–Friday)
Tel: 020 7696 9003
Email: info@cancerbackup.org
Website: www.cancerbackup.org.uk

Cancerbackup is the UK's leading provider of cancer information, emotional support and practical advice to anyone affected by cancer. Its specialist cancer nurses deliver information and support on a freephone helpline, and face-to-face through a network of local walk-in centres. It produces over 70 booklets and 270 factsheets on all aspects of cancer, and has an award-winning website that contains the full text of all their publications, plus a database of support groups and other services for cancer patients.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

151 The Broadway, London SW19 1JQ
Tel: 020 8612 6200
Website: www.cipd.co.uk

The CIPD is the professional body for those involved in the management and development of people and has more than 124,000 individual members. The CIPD's purpose is to lead in the development and promotion of good practice in the field of the management and development of people, for application both by professional members and by their organisational colleagues.

Working with Cancer

Maureen Holland
Tel: 07971 245855
Email: Maureen.holland@ntlworld.com

Lilian Ing
Tel: +65 9617 8346
Email: ithaka@global-nomads.com

Barbara Wilson
Tel: 0208 3984428
Email: barbara.wilson@tiscali.co.uk

Hilary Wright
Tel: 07881 508957
Email: Hilarywright@aol.com

Working with Cancer was formed in the autumn of 2005 by four women who had themselves been treated for breast cancer. They had noticed that although there's a wealth of information and guidance available to cancer sufferers in the form of leaflets and websites, there's surprisingly limited information and advice available to employers about how they should treat employees in this position, and limited advice for employees.

In November 2005 the founder members of Working with Cancer formed a core group with a number of other working men and women who have been affected by cancer, with the principal objective of producing a series of best practice guidelines for employers, employees, co-workers and carers all around the theme of working with cancer.

If you are interested in joining the Working with Cancer group, please email:
WWCancer-owner@yahoogroups.com

Access to Work

Tel: 020 8218 2710 (London region – can give details of other UK regions)
Textphone: 020 8218 2716 or 2717
Website: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Administered by the Department for Work and Pensions, this scheme is provided through disability employment advisers based at local offices of Jobcentre Plus. It provides advice and practical support to disabled people and their employers to help overcome work-related obstacles resulting from a disability.

Cancer Counselling Trust

1 Noel Road, London N1 8HQ
Tel: 020 7704 1137
Email: support@cctrust.org.uk
Website: www.cctrust.org.uk

Qualified counsellors and psychotherapists offer free, confidential counselling to cancer patients, as well as couples or families affected by cancer. Face-to-face counselling is provided at the London office, and phone counselling is available for people unable to visit. Although the counselling is free, donations are welcomed.

Carers UK

20–25 Glasshouse Yard, London EC1A 4JT
Tel: 0808 808 7777 (10:00–12:00, 14:00–16:00, Wednesday and Thursday)
Minicom: 020 7251 8969
Email: info@ukcarers.org
Website: www.carersuk.org

Offers information and support to professionals, relatives and friends who are carers. Has 117 local and regional offices covering England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Will put people in contact with carer support groups in their area.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

For contact details of your nearest CAB, phone 020 7833 2181. Contact details will also be in your local phone book.
Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk (Advice Guide)

An independent network that provides free, impartial information and advice to help anyone with financial, legal and other problems. Has offices around the UK. The website has up-to-date, comprehensive information on many topics, including the NHS. There are separate versions for each UK country. Information is available in English or several other languages.

Community Legal Service Direct

85 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8TX
Tel: 0845 345 4345
Minicom: 0845 609 6677
Website: www.clsdirect.org.uk

Provides contact details for approved solicitors and other specialist organisations who may be able to advise and assist you, subject to eligibility, under the free legal aid scheme.

Compassionate Friends

53 North Street, Bristol BS3 1EN
Helpline: 0845 123 2304
Email: info@tcf.org.uk
Website: www.tcf.org.uk

A nationwide organisation of bereaved parents offering friendship and understanding to other bereaved parents. They can offer personal and group support, as well as support for siblings and grandparents. Befriending rather than counselling.

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR
Helpline: 0870 167 1677 (9:30–17:00, Monday–Friday)
Email: helpline@crusebereavementcare.org
Website: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care is a UK charity offering information and support to anyone bereaved. They don't charge for their services. The information includes practical issues. Cruse's services are provided by a network of over 500 volunteers working in the community, with many branches across the UK.

Department for Work and Pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk or
www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople/fs/en

Disability Alliance

88–94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA
Tel and Minicom: 020 7247 8776
Email: office.da@dial.pipex.com
Website: www.disabilityalliance.org

Registered charity which provides advice about benefit entitlements for people with disabilities.

The Disability Law Service (DLS)

39–45 Cavell Street, London E1 2BP
Tel: 020 7791 9800
Minicom: 020 7791 9801
Email: advice@dls.org.uk
Website: www.dls.org.uk

A registered charity offering free confidential legal advice on disability discrimination in employment to people with disabilities, their families and carers. Can take on certain cases on behalf of disabled employees or job applicants. In addition to employment law advice, DLS also offers advice in other categories of law: community care, education, consumer/contract, welfare benefits.

Disability Living Foundation

380–384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU
Tel: 0845 130 9177 (charged at local call rate)
(10:00–16:00, Monday–Friday)
Email: info@dlf.org.uk
Website: www.dlf.org.uk

Provides information and advice on products and equipment to assist independent living.

Disability Rights Commission (DRC)

Freepost MID 02164, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire CV37 9HY
Tel: 08457 622 633
Textphone: 08457 622 644
Email: enquiry@drc-gb.org
Website: www.drc-gb.org

A national organisation set up by the Government to monitor and combat disability discrimination and promote equality for disabled people. It operates a telephone helpline for people who believe that they may be experiencing disability discrimination at work. Also publishes useful guides and leaflets which can be obtained from their helpline or website. In some cases, the DRC will advise and represent disabled people who make disability discrimination claims.

IFA Promotions

2nd floor, 117 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3BX
Consumer hotline: 0800 085 3250
Type talk: 0800 083 0196
Email: contact@ifap.org.uk
Website: www.ifap.org.uk

IFAP helps people search for details of local member independent financial advisers via the consumer hotline and online searches at www.unbiased.co.uk and www.fsa.gov.uk/consumer

Law Centres Federation

18–19 Warren Street, London W1P 5DB
Tel: 020 7387 8570
Fax: 020 7387 8368
Email: info@lawcentres.org.uk
Website: www.lawcentres.org.uk

Provides details of local law centres that can give legal advice and assistance with employment claims.

Law Society

113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1PL
Tel: 020 7242 1222
Email: info.services@lawsociety.org.uk
Website: www.lawsociety.org.uk

Provides details of solicitors who can advise on discrimination and employment cases.

Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ
Helpline: 0808 808 2020 (9:00–18:00, Monday–Friday)
Email: cancerline@macmillan.org.uk
Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

A national charity providing expert treatment and care through specialist Macmillan nurses and doctors, and grants for patients in financial difficulties. The Macmillan CancerLine gives information for patients and their carers about Macmillan services.

National Debtline

51–53 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8TP
Tel: 0808 808 4000
Website: www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
Gives advice to anyone worried about debt.

Further reading and references

CUKIER, D. (2000) *Coping with radiation therapy*.

3rd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Lowell House.

This is an American book but most of the information is relevant to UK readers. It covers all aspects of radiotherapy including how it works, its use in specific types of cancer, short and long term side effects and how to cope with them. The book also deals with radiation as a diagnostic tool and describes various investigations. A useful glossary is included.

GREAVES, I. *Disability rights handbook: April 2006-April 2007*. London: Disability Alliance.

Covers benefit entitlements, rights at work and other disability issues. Available from Disability Alliance.

LYNCH, G., RYLAND, R. and FRENCH, A. (2006)

A guide to grants for individuals in need. 9th ed.

London: Directory of Social Change.

There is a new edition each year. A detailed directory of over 2000 charities and trusts that provide financial help to people in need. Also lists each organisation's criteria and how to apply. May be available at a public library.

PRIESTMAN, T. (2005) *Coping with chemotherapy*.

London: Sheldon Press.

Written by a senior consultant clinical oncologist, this book offers support for people having chemotherapy. It explains what the treatment is, how the drugs work, and different ways in which they can be given.

REES, G. (2000) *Understanding cancer*. Poole: Family Doctor Publications.

Clearly written and well-illustrated providing information on what cancer is, how the diagnosis is made and treatments. Diagnostic tests are explained and illustrated. Also touches briefly on symptom control, clinical trials and complementary treatments.

SLEVIN, M and KFIR, N. (2002) *Challenging cancer: fighting back, taking control, finding options*. 2nd ed.

London: Class Publishing.

Written by a cancer specialist and psychotherapist, this book aims to help people make sense of a cancer diagnosis to regain control of their lives.

Cancerbackup

Has a wide range of booklets and factsheets about all types of cancer, cancer treatments and living with cancer.

Video

Chemotherapy and radiotherapy (English, Italian versions)

Chemotherapy and radiotherapy by Asian patients for Asian patients (Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali versions)

This video for patients about to have cancer treatment gives an overview of treatment, risks of side effects and methods used to alleviate them. It features patients talking about their experiences. Saeed Jaffrey and Rani Singh also contribute to the Asian language versions. Available from Cancerbackup.

Useful websites

A lot of information about cancer is available on the Internet. Some websites are excellent; others have misleading or out-of-date information. The sites listed below have accurate information and are regularly updated.

www.cancerbackup.org.uk (Cancerbackup)

- contains over 4,500 pages of accurate, up-to-date information on all aspects of cancer and a searchable database of other organisations
- allows you to send questions to specialist cancer nurses by email and has a question-and-answer section
- contains all of Cancerbackup's 70+ booklets and 300+ factsheets in full
- recommends further reading
- has detailed discussion of complex cancer issues for health professionals
- includes Cancerbackup News
- has a search engine for cancer research clinical trials available to cancer patients in the UK and Europe
- offers links to recommended cancer websites around the world.

www.cancerhelp.org.uk (Cancer Research UK)
Contains patient information on all types of cancer and has a cancer research clinical trials database to allow people to identify suitable clinical trials.

www.compactlaw.co.uk/ivillage
(iVillage – work and career)
Discusses unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal, redundancy, discrimination, maternity and paternity rights, flexible working, and statutory sick pay.

www.dipex.org
(Database of individual patient experiences)
Contains information about some cancers and has video and audio clips of people talking about their experiences of cancer and its treatments. Also contains discussion of the physical, social and psychological effects of cancer.

www.disabilityalliance.org (Disability Alliance)
Has detailed information on all aspects of disability, including benefits.

www.dwp.gov.uk (Department for Work and Pensions)
Gives information on all aspects of work and benefits.

www.intelihealth.com (drug and medicines information)
Easy to use and free from medical jargon. Has patient information leaflets which can be printed out.

www.nci.nih.gov (National Cancer Institute – National Institute of Health – USA)
Gives comprehensive information on cancer and treatments.

www.sofa.org (Society of Financial Advisers)
Searchable database of independent financial advisers.

www.workingaftercancer.co.uk (Working after cancer)
Set up by a man who had cancer, this site has practical advice and tips on employment issues.



The Working with Cancer group was formed in Autumn 2005 by four women who had had cancer, with the aim of providing information to employers about how they should treat employees affected by cancer, as well as advice for employees.

The Working with Cancer group has subsequently expanded, after attracting other working men and women who have been affected by cancer, and is primarily focused on developing a series of best practice guidelines for employers, employees, co-workers and carers, around the theme of working with cancer.

*informing
understanding
supporting*



Cancerbackup is a national charity, providing a helpline for cancer patients, their families and friends. Their specialist cancer nurses can give information, emotional support and practical advice on all aspects of cancer and its treatments, and details of local support groups and other services for people with cancer. They produce 70 patient-friendly booklets and over 260 factsheets that are free to patients, their families and friends. They also have eight local walk-in centres across the country and the UK's most comprehensive cancer information website at www.cancerbackup.org.uk.

Cancerbackup, 3 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London EC2A 3JR
Freephone helpline: 0808 800 1234 Tel: 020 7696 9003 Website: cancerbackup.org.uk

We explore leading-edge people management and development issues through our research. Our aim is to share knowledge, increase learning and understanding, and help our members make informed decisions about improving practice in their organisations.

We produce many resources on people management and development issues including guides, books, practical tools, surveys and research reports. We also organise a number of conferences, events and training courses. Please visit www.cipd.co.uk to find out more.



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