

# WORK AND CANCER TOP 10 TIPS

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CANCER SUPPORT

## For line managers

When you find out that an employee has cancer or is caring for someone with cancer, it can be a difficult and sensitive time. Right now they may be dealing with so many medical, emotional and financial issues that your support will be vital. These tips are designed to guide you and support your employee through the cancer journey, from diagnosis through treatment and living with cancer.

- 1** Be sensitive to your employee's needs. Every person has a different cancer experience. Medical treatments and the subsequent physical and emotional reactions will vary from person to person. What may be best for one employee may not suit another.
- 2** Listen to your employee without judgment and try to understand their particular situation. It's fine to ask questions in response to what the employee is sharing with you.
- 3** Check to see if your organisation has any guidelines and policies to provide support to you and your employee. These could include sickness absence, long term conditions, and occupational health policies.
- 4** Be aware cancer is legally defined as a disability, so you might need to make adjustments where appropriate, just as you would with any other disability. If you have an HR department, your HR manager can offer advice about these adjustments or consult with an occupational health professional to make sure that everything is clear.
- 5** Respect your employee's privacy. If they want others in the organisation to be made aware, discuss how they'd prefer to go about this. Ask them whether or not they'd like you to keep in touch if they are off work for a period of time. Decide together on the best way to do so.
- 6** Be aware of the impact that an employee's cancer diagnosis can have on the wider team, the rest of your colleagues and, of course, yourself. If you feel you need more support, ask your own line manager, your HR department or call the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**.
- 7** If you have an HR department, consult with them about your organisation's policy regarding workplace financial entitlements. This will include occupational sickness pay and further benefits that could be of help to your employee.
- 8** Keep in mind that employees who are caring for a person affected by cancer will require your support too. Be aware that the advice given here applies equally to carers.
- 9** Should your employee need to take time off work, get together to discuss a return to work plan. This will help to identify any further support that might be needed prior to, during and following cancer treatment. Consider any approach that may be appropriate, such as a phased return to work or the handover of work on a gradual basis.
- 10** Don't forget that Macmillan Cancer Support is here to help everyone affected by cancer, including family, friends, carers and employers. If you or your employees have questions about cancer call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** or visit [macmillan.org.uk/work](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)