

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

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**WORKING  
THROUGH  
CANCER**

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## 1 Rationale for policy development

The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish good practice in dealing with cancer in the workplace
- provide a framework for supporting employees affected by cancer
- provide guidance to managers on how to support employees affected by cancer and deal with employment issues
- signpost managers and staff to sources of information and guidance
- ensure that all our employees are treated fairly and consistently.

## 2 Policy

Our ambition is to reach and improve the lives of everyone living with cancer.

As well as supporting people affected by cancer outside Macmillan, we want to support our own employees affected by the disease in the best way we can. It is therefore our policy to:

- offer individual practical and emotional support to staff who are affected directly or indirectly by cancer, and to create a caring and understanding environment for them
- lead in the development of best practice in dealing with cancer and work-related issues. We will role model this within Macmillan and our managers and employees will be provided with the knowledge, skills and resources to support this aim
- support employees – whether newly diagnosed, receiving treatment or recovering from cancer – both within the workplace and while they are absent from work
- do whatever we reasonably can to help them perform their job, as appropriate, during their cancer journey, and do everything we can to facilitate their return to work after treatment
- aim to offer benefits such as PMI (private medical insurance) and life assurance that are particularly favourable to staff who have a critical illness, to the extent that our resources allow

- support those who have primary or secondary responsibility for caring for someone affected by cancer
- support individuals and teams who have a work colleague affected by cancer
- ensure good HR practice is in place so that decisions about recruitment, promotions and access to training and other opportunities are made on the basis of merit and that a cancer diagnosis (whether current or prior) will not result in unfair or discriminatory treatment.

Cancer comes within the definition of a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) from the point of diagnosis. This policy complies with our obligations under the Act but goes beyond minimum standards.

The specific practices we will put in place to support staff who have received a cancer diagnosis will include:

- sensitive, practical support from their line manager in dealing with their cancer experience while at work and during any absences
- work adjustments, such as changes to working hours, and adjustments to the work station or office equipment
- paid time off for treatment
- support with return to work, such as a phased return, and advice from occupational health
- work buddies – special support from colleagues who have been through a similar cancer experience
- information about external Macmillan support groups and networks
- access to information and support through our CancerLine
- appropriate sick pay arrangements which balance, on the one hand, our resource constraints as a charity and, on the other, our wish to support staff with the practical problems of absence from work at a very difficult period in their lives; special consideration will be given to those who have a terminal prognosis
- specialist support (which may include counselling) through our Employee Assistance Programme.

For managers and employees who are indirectly affected, we will ensure the following:

- training about cancer, its effects, and how to communicate with people about it
- access to relevant information – including our Management Guidance on Cancer in the Workplace and our cancer guide
- signposting to sources of more specialist information or advice
- a supportive environment where it's okay to talk about cancer, or not talk about it, depending on the needs of the individual; where it's accepted that staff may, from time to time, not feel able to attend certain types of events which could cause them distress; and where we recognise that staff who have regular contact with people affected by cancer may at times need special support from their managers and colleagues.

Although the focus of the policy is cancer, the main principles may be applied in the case of any other critical illness.

All Macmillan managers have the responsibility to familiarise themselves with the policy and to work within its parameters. They also have a responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and understand their own and the organisation's responsibilities in respect of it.

We will review this policy from time to time and amend it as necessary in light of new practice in the field of cancer care and support, and our own circumstances as a charitable organisation.

### **3 Implementation of policy**

Detailed information on how we will implement this policy is given in the Macmillan guide for managers on working through cancer.

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[www.macmillan.org.uk/work](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)

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