


Essential questions for carers  
to ask about work and cancer



**WORK  
IT OUT  
FOR CARERS**

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

We've created this *Work it out* tool for working carers so you can find the information you need about managing work and care responsibilities. In this tool you'll find important questions divided into different areas. Using this tool will not only boost your confidence, but it'll also equip you to deal with any workplace issues you face.

## How to use this tool

*Work it out for carers* is full of questions you may need to ask at different points of your cancer journey. The questions have been divided into four topics: medical, work, home and financial.

Next to each question is a row of boxes showing all the places you can go to for answers:

- ✓ A large tick means that this person or organisation is best able to answer that particular question.
- ✓ A small tick means that this person or organisation may also be able to provide some help.

Of course, not all questions in it will be relevant to everyone, so please think of it as a flexible guide. For example, it's by no means true that all carers need time off work or face workplace difficulties. And not all people will have access to Human Resources or Occupational Health, particularly if you're self employed.

## Further information

We hope you'll find this resource useful and hang on to it for reference. If you have questions about work and cancer or would like to know more, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** or visit **[macmillan.org.uk/work](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/work)**. For more resources specifically for carers visit **[macmillan.org.uk/carers](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/carers)**. You might also be interested in the *Working while caring for someone with cancer* booklet, which can be ordered via the Macmillan Support Line or via **[be.macmillan.org.uk](https://www.be.macmillan.org.uk)**.

## In this tool we refer to

**Oncology team:** this could include oncologists, radiologists and specialist cancer nurses.

**Advisory services:** this could include Citizens Advice Bureau, Jobcentre Plus, benefits advisory services and charities/local centres for carers.

# O MEDICAL

		Occupational health	Line manager	Human resources	Advisory services	Charity/ support group	Union	Social services	Oncology team	GP services
<b>1</b>	I'd like to take time off work to go to hospital appointments with the person I care for. To help me plan my working time, can you tell me how long each appointment will last, including possible delays?								✓	
<b>2</b>	So that I can book time off work, how far in advance can appointments be made for the person I care for?								✓	
<b>3</b>	If the person I care for is required to stay in hospital and visiting hours clash with work, can I visit at different times?								✓	
<b>4</b>	When am I most likely to need to take time off work or to reduce my hours to provide care?								✓	
<b>5</b>	Does the hospital have free wi-fi so that I can keep track of work-related emails?								✓	
<b>6</b>	Can repeat prescriptions be delivered to my local pharmacy so I can collect them outside working hours?									✓

# 2 WORK

		Occupational health	Line manager	Human resources	Advisory services	Charity/ support group	Union	Social services	Oncology team	GP services
<b>7</b>	Where can I find out about my legal rights as a working carer?			✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>8</b>	I'm self-employed. What support can I receive to keep my business running whilst I'm caring?				✓					
<b>9</b>	I find that being a carer can have an effect on my physical and mental wellbeing. How can I work with my employer to reduce the risk of this affecting me and my work?	✓	✓	✓						✓
<b>10</b>	Are there courses or counselling services available for me to access, so I can better manage my work and caring responsibilities?	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
<b>11</b>	Does my company have a policy for supporting carers?		✓	✓						
<b>12</b>	What flexible working arrangements are available to help me balance my work and caring responsibilities (eg working from home, flexible starting or finishing times, compressed or annualised working hours)?		✓	✓						
<b>13</b>	What types of paid and unpaid leave arrangements can you offer me (eg carers leave, sabbaticals, compassionate leave, borrowing holiday days from next year or buying additional days)?		✓	✓						
<b>14</b>	Could I have written confirmation of any agreed flexible working arrangements and/or leave arrangements?		✓	✓						
<b>15</b>	If I'm able to take a substantial amount of time off work to care, how much notice is required before I return?		✓	✓						
<b>16</b>	If I take time off work to care, how can I make sure I'm updated about changes at work which happen during my absence?		✓							
<b>17</b>	Can my work be organised so that it's possible to take leave at short notice (eg if there's a breakdown in care arrangements or the person I care for requires prompt medical attention/hospitalisation)? If so, who should I notify at work?		✓							

# 2 WORK (continued)

		Occupational health	Line manager	Human resources	Advisory services	Charity/ support group	Union	Social services	Oncology team	GP services
18	Would it be okay to make brief personal phone calls during work hours so that I can get in touch with the person I care for and vice versa?		✓							
19	Can we discuss how to go about telling my colleagues and other managers about my situation?		✓	✓						
20	Can we have regular reviews to check my working arrangements?		✓	✓						

# 3 HOME

		Occupational health	Line manager	Human resources	Advisory services	Charity/ support group	Union	Social services	Oncology team	GP services
21	How do I go about applying for a carer's assessment? (This is carried out by social services to assess the support you need to be able to carry out your role as a carer)							✓		
22	How can I organise additional support at home to help me manage work and caring responsibilities (eg day-sitting, night-sitting, care home, day centre)?							✓		
23	How can I meet other working carers to share my experiences and to learn from others?				✓	✓				

# 4

# FINANCIAL

		Occupational health	Line manager	Human resources	Advisory services	Charity/ support group	Union	Social services	Oncology team	GP services
<b>24</b>	What benefits am I entitled to if I'm self-employed (eg Carers Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Carers Premium and Addition, Social Fund)?				✓	✓				
<b>25</b>	What benefits would I be entitled to if I continue working, stop working or return to work?				✓	✓				
<b>26</b>	Does my employment status affect my benefit entitlements (eg if I'm on a short-term contract or employed through an agency)?				✓	✓				
<b>27</b>	If I'm already receiving benefits like Income Support, how will this affect my benefit entitlements as a carer?				✓					
<b>28</b>	If the person I care for is receiving benefits, will this have an impact on my benefit entitlements as a carer and vice versa?				✓	✓				
<b>29</b>	What would the impact on my pay and benefits be if I make adjustments like reducing my working hours?		✓	✓	✓					
<b>30</b>	Who can help me to get evidence to support my application for benefits entitlements relevant to me as a carer?				✓				✓	✓
<b>31</b>	When will my benefits be confirmed?				✓					
<b>32</b>	How long can I claim benefits for?				✓					
<b>33</b>	If I'm unable to work or have reduced my working hours to care, how will this affect my company or state pension?			✓	✓					

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed, you need a team of people in your corner, supporting you every step of the way. That's who we are.

We are the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling you which benefits you're entitled to. The volunteers giving you a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The community supporting you online, any time. The fundraisers who make it all possible.

You don't have to face cancer alone. We can give you the strength to get through it. We are Macmillan Cancer Support.

### **For cancer support every step of the way**

call free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm)

Alternatively, visit **macmillan.org.uk**

Hard of hearing? Use textphone

**0808 808 0121**, or Text Relay.

Non-English speaker? Interpreters available.

*Work it out for carers* was created as part of  
the National Cancer Survivorship Initiative



In partnership with

