# Work and cancer





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| Acknowledgements The original policy in this document was produced in association with the Working with Cancer Group and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Disclaimer The information provided in this model cancer policy is designed to give examples of good practice and is a general guide to your employees’ rights and your responsibilities as an employer. It is not a substitute for legal advice. If you need more details on employee rights, or legal advice, please contact a solicitor. While we endeavour to provide information of the highest quality, Macmillan will not accept any liability for the use, or inability to use any information provided in this model cancer policy. |

**About this model cancer policy**

Each year over 109,000 people of working age are diagnosed with cancer in the UK.[[1]](#footnote-1) There are currently over 700,000 people of working age living with a cancer diagnosis.[[2]](#footnote-2) These trends mean that cancer is an increasingly common issue in the workplace. Employers and managers want to support their staff – and they also need to keep their organisations running smoothly.

This model cancer policy aims to assist you in this task. It is intended as a model of best practice, which you can adapt for use within your own organisation.

Establishing a cancer policy in your organisation can:

* enhance your reputation as a good employer
* reassure your employees that they are valued
* help you meet your legal responsibilities as an employer under the Equality Act 2010 (or Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland)
* provide a framework for supporting employees affected by cancer
* provide guidance to managers
* alert managers and staff to sources of information and guidance
* ensure that all your employees are treated fairly and consistently.

Macmillan provides advice to employers and offers resources, such as this model policy, to help you when a member of staff or their close family member, is diagnosed with cancer. We also provide the information and support people need to remain in or return to work when they are affected by cancer. For more information and additional resources, please visit **macmillan.org.uk/work**

**How to use this model**

This model gives you a template for a workplace policy on cancer. It applies to employees who:

* are diagnosed with cancer
* are affected by a partner or family member’s cancer diagnosis
* become a carer for someone with cancer.

# Structure of the policy

This model policy is structured to cover the various stages of the cancer experience that your employee, or the person they are caring for, may go through, from the time of diagnosis to after treatment. Cancer can affect an individual’s role as an employee and the decisions that they make about work, in different ways, and at different times. Some people may have a change in outlook after diagnosis and choose not to return to work. Others may have unsuccessful treatment or they may be affected by a lasting disability as a result of their cancer or treatment.

# Adapting the template

If your organisation does not have a cancer policy and wishes to introduce one, you may find this document useful as a basis for drafting your own policy. If you already have a cancer or carer’s policy in place, this is very good news. You may want to use this model policy when you review and update your own document. Either way, you can adapt the model to reflect the particular style of your organisation, your existing policies, and the benefits available to your employees.

Within the template, places where you need to insert or adapt the wording are

[in brackets and highlighted in blue]

Please be aware that this model policy and the information included in it are provided as a guide to good practice. It is essential that you review the document in full. If you use the template, make sure the final policy you produce applies to your own organisation and the services, support, and benefits that it can provide.

# Guidance notes

These notes give you additional information and highlight issues you need to be aware of when adapting the policy for your own use.

* **Confidentiality –** A cancer diagnosis is sensitive, personal information. All communications about your employee’s issues with cancer must be treated confidentially. Be aware of your responsibilities under the Data Protection Act.
* **Disability rights –** The employment provisions of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) came into force on 1 October 2010. The Act replaces previous discrimination laws, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), bringing them all together under one piece of legislation.Like the DDA, the Act requires employers to make reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability. Everyone with cancer is classed as disabled under the Act and they are protected by it from the time they are diagnosed. This protection applies to all aspects of employment including the recruitment process, terms, conditions and benefits, and opportunities for promotion and training. It also covers unfair treatment compared to other workers, such as dismissal, harassment and victimisation. Even if a person who has had cancer in the past has been successfully treated and is now ‘cured’, they will still be covered by the Act. It is important to be aware of your organisation’s responsibilities under this legislation. The DDA still protects people with a disability in Northern Ireland.
* **Carers’ rights –** The Act protects people who experience discrimination because they are associated with someone who has a disability. For example, it would be unlawful if the partner of someone who has cancer was refused promotion because of concerns that they would be unable to give sufficient attention to the job.   
  However, the Act does not allow reasonable adjustments to be claimed for caring responsibilities, although other legislation may provide the right to a 'reasonable' amount of unpaid time off work for caring responsibilities.
* **Flexibility –** Cancer affects every person differently. It is difficult to predict what will happen to any individual. A flexible approach is essential to ensure arrangements run smoothly. Your employee may require leave at short notice. They may have to cope with setbacks. Some people manage treatment with few problems while others are unable to work. When arranging cover or adapted working conditions, try to consider all the options that could work well for both your employee and your organisation.
* **Changes in employment status** **–** Your employee may decide   
  or need to have different responsibilities, or even leave work.   
  Please bear in mind that any change in your employee’s terms of employment could affect their financial situation. Insurance payments, company benefits or state benefits could be affected. Your employee should take independent advice on any relevant financial matters before any formal change in their terms of employment is agreed.

# Additional resources

In addition to this model policy, Macmillan offers a range of resources to support you and your employees. Please visit **macmillan.org.uk/work** to find out more.

Anyone affected by cancer can get emotional support, up-to-date information and benefits advice through the Macmillan Support Line on **0808 808 00 00**. There is also information on our website at **macmillan.org.uk**

**HR policy for employees affected by cancer**

**[Template to be adapted for your organisation]**

# Contents of this policy

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 1. Introduction** | | |
| 1.1 | Rationale for the policy | |
| 1.2 | Overview of the policy – principles | |
| 1.3 | Scope – who is covered by this policy | |
| **Section 2. Employees diagnosed with cancer** | | |
| 2.1 | On diagnosis | 2.1.1 Support we offer you  2.1.2 Communication  2.1.3 Financial considerations  2.1.4 Payment during sickness absence |
| 2.2 | Working during treatment | 2.2.1 Options for flexible working  2.2.2 Time off during treatment |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2.3 | Extended absence during treatment | |
| 2.4 | Returning to work after treatment | * + 1. Options to discuss     2. Disability caused by cancer or treatment |
| 2.5 | Deciding to stop work | |
| 2.6 | Fairness | * + 1. Resolving disagreements     2. Equality Act 2010 |
| **Section 3. Carers/employees with a family member diagnosed with cancer** | | |
| 3.1 | Support we offer you | |
| 3.2 | Communication | * + 1. Telling management     2. Telling others at work |
| 3.3 | Balancing work and your caring responsibilities | * + 1. Short-term solutions     2. Options for flexible working     3. Financial considerations |
| 3.4 | Deciding to stop work | |
| 3.5 | Fairness | |
| 3.6 | Bereavement | |

**Section 1. Introduction**

# 1.1 Rationale for the policy

One in three people are affected by cancer. Because it is so common,

[insert name of your organisation] has thought about the impact cancer may have on our employees and our work.

This policy outlines what you can expect from us if:

* you are diagnosed with cancer
* your partner or a member of your family is diagnosed with cancer
* you become a carer for someone who has been diagnosed with cancer.

We feel a clear responsibility to help any of our employees who are affected in some way by a diagnosis of cancer. [Insert name of your organisation] will do all we can to support you.

# 1.2 Overview of the policy - principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

## Respect for dignity and privacy

[Insert name of your organisation] will respect the privacy of any employee affected directly or indirectly (ie via close family or friends), by cancer. No sensitive information of any kind should therefore be shared with anyone, without your prior consent. You also have the right to say what purpose the information should or should not be used for.

## Continued employee involvement and engagement

[Insert name of your organisation] will make every effort to communicate with you during any absence from work. You should also do your best to let us know how we can contact you, and keep us informed of your situation.

**Minimising financial detriment**

[Insert name of your organisation] where possible will try to minimise the effect that your diagnosis or role as a carer may have on your pay and benefits, as set out in this policy and [in the HR policy].

## Flexibility

Your manager(s) will try to structure your schedule and workload with enough flexibility so you can manage your medical treatment and related needs, while maintaining effectiveness and efficiency at work.

## Continued access to development opportunities

You will continue to have access to appropriate professional development opportunities, wherever possible.

## Providing information and support

[Insert name of your organisation] will make every effort to link you with access to the right support and information, including, but not limited to:

* working during treatment
* absence from work
* successful reintegration into work
* emotional support
* professional advice.

## Supporting the team

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

**1.3 Scope – who is covered by this policy**

This policy applies to all employees (full-time and part-time) whether fixed-term, casual or permanent. It covers employees with a diagnosis of cancer. Parts of this policy also apply to employees who are caring for a relative with a cancer diagnosis (Section 3 explains the policy for carers in more detail).

[Insert name of your organisation] feels a responsibility to support employees affected by cancer and we will be as flexible as possible, bearing in mind each individual’s personal circumstances and the needs of the organisation.

**Section 2. Employees diagnosed with cancer**

We know that your needs will change over time. This policy has been designed to support you at the various stages of your cancer experience.

# 2.1 On diagnosis

Facing a cancer diagnosis is stressful. We want to support you and this section of the policy explains how we can help you in the early days.

## 2.1.1 Support we offer you

[Insert name of your organisation] offers a range of employee benefits that may be helpful to you during this time and at later stages.

## Private medical care scheme

## [amend/delete as appropriate]

[Insert name of your organisation]’s medical care scheme is administered by [insert name of your medical insurance provider] and is a [contributory / non-contributory : delete as appropriate] healthcare arrangement that all permanent employees (full-time and part-time) are eligible to join. Full details of the scheme are available from [insert name of contact person in your organisation, eg HR officer].

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

**Employee assistance programme**

[amend/delete as appropriate] employees have access to a helpline operated by [insert name of your provider].

This service is also available to [insert extent of cover as appropriate].

This employee assistance programme is a confidential and impartial service that offers advice and support, whatever the problem, be it personal or work-related. The number is free to call and open [insert opening times]. Call [insert name of your provider] and quote [insert access code / account name].

In addition, there is a support network in the company to provide advice and guidance to employees affected by cancer or other critical illnesses. Please contact [the HR department / occupational health / insert name of appropriate contact person] for further information.

**Occupational health services**

[amend/delete as appropriate]

You may benefit from the help of an occupational health adviser. This is a health professional, such as a nurse or doctor, who specialises in workplace health issues. Occupational health professionals draw on their clinical knowledge and an awareness of your role in the workplace.

The occupational health professional serves as an adviser to you and your managers. They can help with:

* adjustments to your job to accommodate your health needs
* correspondence between [insert name of your organisation] and   
  your doctors
* advice when you return to work after treatment
* ongoing support for you and your managers.

Occupational health services are not provided free under the NHS. They are offered at the discretion of employers. We have [an occupational health adviser in-house / a contract with an occupational health provider : delete as appropriate]. To find out more, speak to [insert name of appropriate contact person].

## 2.1.2 Communication

Some people may want to keep a cancer diagnosis to themselves, find information on their own and organise their own system to cope at work. We recognise that telling people at work about your cancer may not be easy and you are not required to do so by law. However, if we know that you have cancer, we can help you by providing support and giving you information about your rights. We can also make sure that you have time off if you need it and that you receive any sick pay you’re entitled to. We can also arrange cover when you are away and minimise the impact on your colleagues [and clients/customers: delete as appropriate].

## Flexibility

Until you have actually started treatment for cancer, it is difficult to know how it will affect you. You may need to take time off at short notice, depending on your type of cancer and your treatment. Under our cancer policy, managers should understand the need for flexibility, as each person’s experience of cancer is different.

The earlier you can tell your line manager about your cancer diagnosis, the more time everyone will have to plan around the potential impact on your work. As the situation becomes clearer, make sure you keep them up-to-date.

## Telling management about your cancer

The first thing to do is request a private meeting with your manager. If you wish, you may have someone else with you to act in a support capacity (eg a colleague or an employee representative) for this or any other meeting relating to your cancer. If you feel unable to discuss your cancer diagnosis and treatment with your line manager, you can speak to [the HR department / occupational health adviser / insert name of appropriate contact person] instead.

Once you tell your manager, they will need your permission to share that information with [HR and : delete if appropriate] other managers who may be affected. Equally, you may prefer to tell them yourself.

As soon as it is possible and appropriate to do so, [HR or : delete if appropriate] your line manager will discuss with you:

* whether you need to take time off to come to terms with the immediate diagnosis
* the possible impact on your work and whether you would like colleagues and relevant people outside the organisation to be told about your cancer
* your permission for us 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:

* our sick leave and sick pay policies
* our critical illness policy [if applicable]
* our private medical insurance scheme [if applicable]
* other relevant employee benefits
* counselling and other support services
* flexible working and work adjustment policies, including options for taking leave
* other sources of information and support.

## Telling your work colleagues and others

[Insert name of your organisation] respects your wish for privacy and confidentiality concerning your personal circumstances. At the same time, we will need to make arrangements to cover sickness absence effectively.

Your line manager [and HR : delete if appropriate] will agree with you from the outset what (if anything) to tell your colleagues at work. We will agree what to say to others verbally, and what to tell people in writing. We will also ask if you want your colleagues to know about your illness but feel unable to tell them yourself. This will also apply to [clients / customers : delete or change as appropriate] and other third parties.

## 2.1.3 Financial considerations

Our intent is to try to minimise any financial hardship which our employees may suffer as a result of cancer. If you have any concerns about your financial position as a result of your cancer, please feel free to discuss this with your line manager [or HR representative : delete as appropriate]. Doing this early on may help you lessen the impact of any financial problems. We will be able to advise you on [insert name of your organisation]’s policies and benefits.

You may also be eligible for state benefits. This can be a very significant source of new income for people affected by cancer. Some benefits for carers and people with cancer are not dependent on income and you may be able to claim while in work. It is important to apply quickly so you do not miss out on payments. Where possible, we will also give you information about where to seek expert advice on state benefits and other financial matters. For more information, please speak to: [the HR department / insert name of appropriate contact person].

## 2.1.4 Payment during sickness absence

If you have a cancer diagnosis, you are likely to need time off for further tests, treatment and recovery. You should discuss the options with your manager [and HR : delete as appropriate] as soon as possible.

For details of your entitlement to time off for these medical needs, and for pay during sickness absence, please refer to [the organisation’s policy on sickness absence]. We are also willing to discuss alternative solutions, depending on your needs and those of the organisation.

Remember to ask your doctor for a medical certificate to cover any periods of absence, and to send them to [name appropriate contact, eg your manager / the HR department/ occupational health] as soon as possible.

Employers are obliged to pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to qualifying employees.

Please see [your contract of employment / the organisation’s policy on sickness absence : delete as appropriate] for more details.

SSP is part of the benefits system, which can become a complex area if you take extended periods of time off work. We would be happy to refer you to independent experts who can advise you on SSP and other state benefits. Please speak to [insert appropriate contact name here, eg HR] for more information.

**2.2 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 is often difficult to know exactly how the treatment may affect you. It is helpful to let your manager know this so that they are aware you may need to change your work plans at short notice.

## 2.2.1 Options for flexible working

While you are affected by cancer, and to support our employees as best as we can, we are willing to consider flexible working options, if these suit your needs and are practical for the organisation.

If you decide that in order to support your wellbeing, you would benefit from working from home, either on a full-time or part-time basis, you should discuss this with your line manager

[and HR: delete as appropriate]

Consideration can be given to the feasibility of this option and if approved they can arrange for any necessary technological support to be provided.

Other ways we may be able to help you could include:

* 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.

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

**2.2.2 Time off during treatment**

Even if you decide to work either during or after treatment, you will probably need to take time off for medical appointments and follow-up procedures.

When it is 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.

For details of your entitlement to time off for these medical needs, please refer to

[your contract of employment / the organisation’s policy on sickness absence : delete as appropriate].

## 2.3 Extended absence during treatment

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

If you take an extended period of absence, you may qualify for insurance payments if you are covered by one of the policies offered to employees.

Please speak to [insert appropriate contact name here, e.g. HR] for more information.

## Staying in touch

In the case of an extended period of absence, your [HR department or: delete if appropriate] line manager will ask if you would like your colleagues to keep in contact with you and if so, how frequently you would like that contact to be. This may help you keep up with what is happening at work and help you feel like you are still part of the team. If you need privacy, we will respect that, too. You can always change your mind and re-establish contact when it feels right for you.

When you are feeling up to it, we encourage you to have regular discussions with your line manager [and HR : delete if appropriate] to review how your absence is being managed. This can be handled on the phone or in person.

# 2.4 Returning to work after treatment

If you have been away from work during your treatment, when it is finished you will 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. If you have remained on the job during your treatment, you will need to decide when and if you want to return to your previous patterns of work.

Clearly, your decision will depend on your health as well as your personal circumstances and wishes, and any changes will be made in accordance with medical advice from your doctor and/or our occupational health advisers [delete as appropriate].

Very often a diagnosis of cancer will lead an individual to rethink their lifestyle and their priorities. Some people 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 will provide whatever support we can to assist you at this stage in your recovery.

With your permission, we will usually seek advice from an occupational health adviser about the best way to help you move back into work.

## 2.4.1 Options to discuss

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 is right for you.

Before you come back to work we will arrange a ‘return-to-work’ interview where you, your manager [and HR : delete as appropriate] can discuss the options for making the transition back to work, in accordance with the medical advice you have been given.

It may be helpful to seek occupational health advice at this meeting, or you may wish to bring your partner or friend with you. This meeting will also be used as an opportunity to update you on any changes which may have taken place in your team or the wider organisation during your absence:

[delete as appropriate].

If you are still coping with some of the effects of treatment, you should discuss any changes that can be made to your work to help you. Options you may want to consider include:

* 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.

Try to be realistic about how much you can manage at the outset. For example, people who have been diagnosed with cancer can feel very tired for quite a long time, even after their treatment is finished. We will do our best to accommodate changes while taking into account the nature of your role and the needs of the organisation.

Any changes to your working conditions may affect your terms of employment, and we will make sure everyone is clear about the impact before any formal agreement is reached.

## 2.4.2 Disability caused by cancer or treatment

All people with cancer are protected by disability discrimination legislation, from the time they are diagnosed. On your return to work, [insert name of organisation] will make reasonable adjustments if needed to enable you to continue to work. Under the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland) employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to workplaces and working practices to ensure that people with a disability are not at a disadvantage compared to others.

# 2.5 Deciding to stop work

Some people choose to give up work completely when they are 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 to talk this through (see Section 2.1.1 Support we offer you).

If your doctors find that your health is unlikely to improve, you may decide you are unable to continue to attend work.

**Financial considerations**

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

However, it may not be wise for you to formally retire because life assurance and pension payments attached to your job could be affected by your employment status. State benefits can also be affected. These financial considerations may be important to the welfare of your family or dependants. Remember that you can’t choose to retire early (on an enhanced pension) if you’re medically fit to work.

Before taking any formal steps that affect your employment status, it is essential that you take appropriate financial advice and/or welfare rights adviser.

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

If you are unsure of where to go for advice, you can start by asking [the occupational health service, the HR department or : delete as appropriate]

your line manager. Your employee representative, for example, your trade union if you belong to one, can also be a good source of advice.

# 2.6 Fairness

[Insert name of your organisation] strives to be fair to all of our employees.

## 2.6.1 Resolving disagreements

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly as a result of your illness, you should raise the issue promptly with your line manager [and / or HR : delete as appropriate]. They will try to resolve the problem informally.

If you are unable to resolve the issue, it will be considered under the organisation’s grievance procedure.

* + 1. **Equality Act 2010**

From the point you are diagnosed with cancer, you are automatically classified as disabled for the purposes of the Equality Act (or the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland). This means you should not be denied opportunities at work because of your cancer. We should make reasonable adjustments to allow you to continue to succeed at work. The law also protects you against any discrimination in the workplace, which is because of your cancer. Those who experience discrimination because of their association with a person who has a disability are now protected against direct discrimination, harassment and victimisation. As an employer, [Insert name of your organisation] is committed to meeting our obligations under this legislation.

**Section 3. Carers/ employees with a family member diagnosed   
with cancer**

If your partner or family member has cancer, you may need to take time off work to look after them or deal with issues arising from their condition.

[Insert name of your organisation] believes it has a responsibility to support employees affected in this way. We will be as flexible as possible in our approach, bearing in mind each individual’s personal circumstances and the needs of the organisation.

# 3.1 Support we offer you

We know that hearing the news about a cancer diagnosis is difficult. It can also be a challenge to balance caring and work. We offer a range of employee benefits to support you in these circumstances.

## Private medical care scheme

## [amend/delete as appropriate]

[Insert name of your organisation]’s medical care scheme is administered by

[insert name of your medical insurance provider] and is a [contributory / non- contributory : delete as appropriate] healthcare arrangement that all permanent employees (full-time and part-time) are eligible to join. Full details of the scheme are available from [insert name of contact person in your organisation, eg HR officer].

You should check with [HR / insert name of your medical insurance provider]

to confirm whether or not the person you are caring for is covered under the scheme.

If, as a result of a consultation with your GP, your partner or relative is referred for further advice or treatment, you must contact [insert name of your medical insurance provider] before treatment or tests, for pre-authorisation of their eligibility and cover.

**Employee assistance programme**

[amend/delete as appropriate]

All employees have access to a helpline operated by [insert name of your provider]. This service is also available to employees’ partners and children under the age of 21, who are living at home. This employee assistance programme is a confidential and impartial service that offers advice and support, whatever the problem, be it personal or work-related. The number is free to call and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call [insert name of your provider and telephone number?] and quote [insert access code / account name].

In addition, there is a support network in the company to provide advice and guidance to employees affected by cancer or other critical illnesses. Please contact [the HR department / occupational health / insert name of appropriate contact person] for further information.

# 3.2 Communication

The earlier you can tell your line manager about your relative’s cancer diagnosis, the more time everyone will have to plan around the potential impact on your work. As the situation becomes clearer, make sure you keep them up-to-date.

## 3.2.1 Telling management

We recognise this may not be easy for you. However, it is very difficult for your manager and other people at work to support you, if we are unaware of your circumstances.

For example, you may find it difficult to take time off to help your relative, if your manager does not know why you need to do this. We also need to arrange cover when you are away and minimise the impact on your colleagues

[and clients / customers : delete or change as appropriate].

The first thing to do is request a private meeting with your manager. If you wish, you may have someone else with you (eg a colleague or an employee representative) for this or any other meeting relating to your relative’s cancer. If you feel unable to discuss this with your line manager, you can speak to

[the HR department / insert name of appropriate contact person ]

instead.

## 3.2.2 Telling others at work

Once you disclose your situation to your manager, they will need your permission to share that information with

[HR and : delete if appropriate]

any other managers who may be affected by your absence.

Equally, you may prefer to tell people yourself. If so, you should do this as soon as you can so that we can quickly take the appropriate steps to help you.

[Insert name of organisation] respects your wish for privacy and confidentiality concerning your personal circumstances.

At the same time, we will need to make arrangements for any absence arising from the situation. [HR and : delete if appropriate] your line manager will agree with you from the outset what, if anything (both verbally and in writing), to tell your colleagues at work. This will also apply to clients and other third parties.

# Balancing work and your caring responsibilities

Until treatment for cancer has actually started, it is difficult to know how it will affect a person. You may need to take time off at short notice, depending on the type of cancer and treatment. Under our cancer policy, managers should understand the need for flexibility, as each person’s experience of cancer is different.

## 3.3.1 Short-term solutions

If you need time off work to look after a relative with cancer, there are various options. These might include taking paid annual leave or time off in lieu.

## Family or emergency leave

You are entitled to reasonable time off to make necessary arrangements to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem concerning a dependant, and to make any necessary long-term arrangements. This leave may be paid or unpaid, depending on the circumstances.

A ‘dependant’ is defined as a spouse, civil partner, child or parent (but not grandparent) of the employee or a person who lives in the same household as the employee, excluding tenants, lodgers and employees. Where a dependant is critically ill, family leave may be taken to make emergency or longer-term care arrangements. You may also need to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements.

The definition of a ‘dependant’ is extended in certain circumstances. Please refer to our family and emergency leave policy for more information.

## Parental leave

If you are the parent of a child under 18 who is critically ill and therefore defined as ‘disabled’, you will be entitled to take parental leave. You can take up to four weeks per year and up to 18 weeks parental leave in total. This leave will be paid at our discretion, or we may allow you a longer period of leave depending on your individual circumstances. You are eligible for parental leave once you have completed one year’s continuous service. Please refer to our parental leave policy for more information.

## 3.3.2 Options for flexible working

We are willing to consider various options to allow you to continue working and also care for your relative with cancer. Depending on your needs and the requirements of your job, we may be able to:

* plan a reduced or more flexible working schedule
* ask colleagues to be supportive and to help with some of your work
* allow you to work from home.

Any changes to your working conditions may affect your terms of employment, and we will make sure everyone is clear about the impact before any formal agreement is reached.

## Carers’ rights and flexible working

If you have responsibility for a child under the age of 16, a disabled child under the age of 18, or are caring for an adult who is defined as a ‘dependant’ under the legislation (see section 3.3.1), you have a legal right to request flexible working arrangements. If you are caring for a loved one with cancer, we will make every effort to accommodate such a request, bearing in mind the needs of the organisation.

## 3.3.3 Financial considerations

You may be eligible for state benefits. This can be a very significant source of new income for people affected by cancer. Some benefits for carers and people with cancer are not dependent on income and you may be able to claim while in work. It is important to apply quickly so you do not miss out on payments. Where possible, we will also give you information about where to seek expert advice on state benefits and other financial matters. For more information, please speak to: [the HR department / insert name of appropriate contact person].

# 3.4 Deciding to stop work

Some people choose to give up work completely when they are looking after someone with cancer.

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 to talk this through (see Section 3.1 Support we offer you).

However, before taking any formal steps that affect your employment status, it is essential that you seek appropriate financial advice. Insurance, pension payments and other employee benefits attached to your job could be affected by your employment status. State benefits can also be affected so you may need specialist advice. These financial considerations may be important to the welfare of your family or dependants. Consider your circumstances carefully before deciding what to do.

If you are unsure where to go for advice, you can start by asking

[the HR department or : delete as appropriate] your line manager. Your employee representative, for example, your trade union if you belong to one, can also be a good source of advice.

# 3.5 Fairness

[Insert name of your organisation] strives to be fair to all of our employees.

## Resolving problems

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly as a result of your caring responsibilities, you should raise the issue promptly with your line manager

[and / or HR : delete as appropriate].

They will try to resolve the problem informally. If you are unable to resolve the issue, it will be considered under the organisation’s grievance procedure. Under the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland), you are protected against any discrimination in the workplace that is because you are associated with someone with a disability.

# 3.6 Bereavement

If you are facing the death of loved one, we will of course make every effort to support you. We recognise this is an emotional time. You will also need to make practical arrangements, attend the funeral and help your family.

Please refer to our compassionate leave policy for more information about time off work.

Please let your line manager know whether you want to hear from work colleagues during this time and if so, what kind of contact you would prefer.

[End of policy]

1. Cancer Research UK. *Cancer incidence by age – UK statistics*. <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/incidence/age/index.htm> (Accessed 26 August 2010). This estimate is for 15–64 year olds in 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Maddams J et al. Cancer prevalence in the United Kingdom: estimates for 2008. *British Journal of Cancer*. 2009; 101: 541–547 and Cancer prevalence in the UK, 2008 <http://library.ncin.org.uk/docs/080714-TCR-UK_prevalence.pdf> (Accessed 26 August 2010). This estimate is for 18–64 year olds in 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)