Work (employment)

Being diagnosed with cancer is one of the most difficult situations anyone has to face. It can affect all areas of your life, including work.

You may need time off work to have tests, appointments and treatments. You may also need time to cope with and adjust to your feelings. It can be difficult to concentrate and manage your work when you feel anxious, shocked, or upset.

Some people stop work during treatment and for a while after until they feel ready to go back. Others carry on working, perhaps with reduced hours or changes to their job. Working may give you a sense of reality and routine. It may be essential for your finances. Your work may also be an important place for friendships and social life. Some people choose not to go back to work.

Tips for managing work when you have cancer

• Be informed. Knowing more about cancer and its treatments can help you understand the possible effects on your work life. Your cancer doctor or nurse can give you information.

• Know your rights. If you have or have had cancer, you are covered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Under these laws, employers must make reasonable adjustments to make sure you are not disadvantaged compared to other people in the workplace.

• Be prepared. Check your company’s guidelines and sickness policies.

• Tell your employer. If your employer knows about your illness they may be able to suggest reasonable adjustments to help you carry on working or return to work. This includes things like time off for treatment, changes to working hours or extra breaks to help you cope with tiredness.

• Ask for confidentiality. Ask your employer to keep the information you give them confidential. They should not tell anyone unless you give them permission.

• Plan your finances. If you are taking time off work you may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay, occupational or company sick pay, or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Depending on your income, you may also be able to claim benefits.

• Ask for a fit note. If you are off sick for more than a few days, ask your doctor for a fit note. You need a fit note to get sick pay and claim benefits.

• Keep in touch. Agree a communication plan with your employer that you are happy with. For example, you might want to arrange a fortnightly telephone call.

• Talk about your return to work. You and your manager can agree a flexible return-to-work plan. Your employer should consider making reasonable and practical adjustments to help you get back to work. For example, this could mean a phased return to work or support to help you cope with treatment side effects.

• Stop working or take early retirement. It may be possible to take your pension early. Talk to a financial advisor about your options.
## Local resources:

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<th>Resource</th>
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## National resources:

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<th>Resource</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Macmillan work support service</td>
<td><a href="http://www.macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork">www.macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel 0808 808 00 00 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Access to Work</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work">www.gov.uk/access-to-work</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Helpline 0800 121 7479 (Mon to Fri, 8am to 6pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com">www.equalityadvisoryservice.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tel 0808 800 0082 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 7pm, Sat, 10am to 2pm)</td>
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## Further information

- www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/work-and-cancer
- www.macmillan.org.uk/work

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk
- Work and cancer
- Questions to ask about work and cancer
- Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer

## More information and support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit macmillan.org.uk

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on 18001 0808 808 00 00, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.