

# Looking for work

Some people give up work when they are diagnosed with cancer. They may choose to give up work. Or, they may need to stop working because of the impact the cancer and its treatment has on their health. Giving up lets them focus on their health and other aspects of their life, such as family and friends. Some people may decide to return to work at a later date, or they may choose to do something different.

Looking for a new job after cancer treatment can be a positive part of recovery. You may decide to return to the kind of work you did before, or have a complete change. Some people look for a less stressful job or one they would enjoy more. Others may try to do something they have always wanted to do.

## Tips for going back to work when you have had 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 will give you more information.
- Know your rights. If you have or have had cancer, the law considers you to be disabled. It is unlawful for a potential employer to discriminate against a person because of their disability. This was made law under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.
  - You may not consider yourself to be disabled. But if an employer asks if you are disabled, you should say yes for the purposes of the Equality Act and the DDA.
  - An employer can only ask questions about your health before they offer you a job in certain circumstances. Our booklet **Work and cancer** has more information.
  - An employer can only ask you for information about your health after they have offered you a job. If they then decide to withdraw the job offer, this must be for reasons that are non-discriminatory.
  - Both the Equality Act and the DDA say your employer has to make reasonable adjustments to your workplace and working practices. This is to try to support you to do your job. Our booklet **Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer** has more information.
  - In Northern Ireland, employers can ask job applicants about their health. But under the DDA, they cannot discriminate against you because of your disability.
  - It is important not to mislead a potential employer. Giving false or incomplete information that is found out at a later stage could put you in a difficult position.
- Prepare for interviews. Rehearse how to answer any questions about your health. If you are asked about gaps in your work history, you can explain you were dealing with some health issues. Be clear you are now ready and keen to get back to work. Emphasise the skills and strengths you have to do the job, rather than talk about your illness.
- Manage your finances. While you are unemployed or on a low income, you may be entitled to claim benefits. Benefits are payments from the government to people in need. Call **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a Macmillan financial guide.

**Local resources:**

| Resource | Contact details |
|----------|-----------------|
|          |                 |

**National resources:**

| Resource  | Contact details  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macmillan Work Support Service</li> <li>• Access to Work (England, Scotland and Wales)</li> <li>• Access to Work (Northern Ireland)</li> <li>• Fit for Work (England and Wales)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork">www.macmillan.org.uk/rightsatwork</a><br/>Tel 0800 808 00 00</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work">www.gov.uk/access-to-work</a><br/>Tel 0800 121 7479</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work">www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work</a><br/>Tel 0289 025 223</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.fitforwork.org">www.fitforwork.org</a><br/>Tel 0800 032 6235</li> </ul> |

**Further information**

[macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/work-and-cancer](http://macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/work-and-cancer)

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk)

- **Work and cancer**
- **Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer**
- **Help with the cost of 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**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://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](http://macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call our support line.