A cancer diagnosis can affect everything. But if you’re living with cancer – or you love someone who is – we’re here to help you through. From information on treatment and its effects to advice on work and benefits to emotional support, we’ll help you feel more in control of your life.

For answers, help or just a chat call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm).
In the run up to the recent General Election, which took place on 7 May 2015, we called on all political parties to help make cancer care a priority as part of our Cancer: Time to Choose campaign. As a result, all of the main political parties in the UK have made commitments to improving cancer care, including the Conservative Party who now form the Government. We will be calling on them to uphold these promises in the coming months.
How can this guide help?

This guide explains how you can help us do this by meeting your newly elected MP and provides all the information you need to make it a success. Arranging a meeting is simple and talking to them about your experience of cancer can help to persuade them to champion cancer care in Parliament.

Cancer: Time to Choose

Our Cancer: Time to Choose campaign asked all political parties to make cancer care a priority. We called on the next Government to choose to commit to take action under three key calls:

Choose living well
Too many people don’t get the help they need to live well once treatment has ended and our cancer survival rates don’t match the best in Europe. We need earlier diagnosis and better support after treatment.

Choose dignity
Right now one person in every five with cancer doesn’t feel treated as an individual and too many NHS staff don’t feel valued. We need health services that protect the dignity of patients, while giving staff the support they need to do this.

Choose a good death
A lack of support outside of hospital denies many people the chance to die in the place they want to – often at home. We need free social care to allow people to fulfil their wish to die at home if they choose.

As a result of our campaign, all of the main political parties in England made promises that, if delivered, will help achieve these aims.

For more information on our calls visit macmillan.org.uk/ge2015

‘I managed to overcome my childhood cancer, but I know that there are a lot of people out there who still need help and their numbers are only going to rise. That’s why I want cancer care to be a priority for the Government.’

Monique, diagnosed with ganglioneuroblastoma
2015 Manifesto Commitments

The **Conservative Party** said they would:
- lead the world in fighting cancer, by continuing the lifesaving Cancer Drugs Fund
- ensure that English hospitals and GP surgeries are the safest in the world, places where you are treated with dignity and respect
- support commissioners to combine better health and social care services for the terminally ill so that more people are able to die in a place of their choice
- increase support for full-time unpaid carers.

The **Green Party** said they would:
- work to ensure that cancer outcomes in the UK are as good as the best in Europe
- engage, empower and hear patients and carers at all times, treating both with dignity
- provide free social care at the end of life enabling people to die where they choose to die
- integrate health and care services so as to look after carers as well as those they care for.

The **Labour Party** said they would:
- match the best in Europe for cancer survival
- make sure NHS staff are supported to deliver the ambition that all patients are treated with the highest levels of dignity and respect
- support those who are terminally ill with the greatest care needs to remain at home at the end of their life if they wish, with homecare provided on the NHS
- introduce a new duty on NHS organisations to identify carers so that they can be linked up with the right support.

The **Liberal Democrat Party** said they would:
- set ambitious goals to improve outcomes for the most serious life-threatening diseases like cancer and long-term conditions like dementia and set clear goals for earlier diagnosis and improved aftercare for conditions like cancer and heart disease
- set the highest standards in care, with a well-trained and motivated workforce, and get health and care services to work together without artificial boundaries
- provide more choice at the end of life, and free end-of-life social care for those placed on their local end-of-life register if evidence shows it is affordable and cost effective
- give the NHS a legal duty to identify carers and develop a Carer’s Passport scheme to inform carers of their rights in the NHS.

**UKIP** said they would:
- abolish the annual assessment process for continuing healthcare funding in respect of those suffering from degenerative, terminal illnesses
- invest £200 million to make parking at English hospitals free for patients and their visitors.

These promises are an excellent base for improving cancer care during the five years of this Parliament. The **Conservative Party** has been elected with a majority, which means that they are the only governing party and the commitments in their manifesto will form the basis of this Government’s work.

MPs from the other parties will be able to hold the Government to account and can push for action on cancer care more broadly.

Note: This guide has been produced for people in England and therefore doesn’t include the Scottish National Party’s (SNP) manifesto commitments as no SNP MP represents an English constituency.
What can I do?

You can help us hold the Government to account by meeting your newly elected MP and letting them know why it’s important to you that they champion cancer care in Parliament.

Whether your MP is new to Parliament or has just been re-elected, now is an ideal time to get in touch and welcome them. Right now your MP will be looking ahead to the next five years so, by meeting them now, you can help make sure that improving cancer care is at the forefront of their mind. And if your MP is new to the job, it’s a good opportunity for you to get to know each other, and for them to learn more about some of the issues in their constituency.

Setting up a meeting

Arranging a meeting with your MP can be one of the most effective ways to raise the importance of improving cancer care. Each MP will have a preferred way of setting up meetings with their constituents – you can check what this is by visiting your MP’s website or calling their constituency office. Normally they will run drop in surgery sessions – times and locations of these can be found on your MP’s website or advertised in places like your local library.

Alternatively you can contact them to set up a meeting. All you need to do is write, email or call their constituency office, briefly outline what you would like to discuss and request that a time is set up. If you don’t get a reply within three weeks, it’s a good idea to phone their office and check that someone is dealing with your query.

If you aren’t sure who your MP is, you can find out by visiting theyworkforyou.com or you can call the information office in Parliament on 020 7219 4272. You can also ask Macmillan’s Campaigns team to check for you by emailing campaigns@macmillan.org.uk

Making the most of your meeting

Once you’ve got a meeting, it’s a good idea to make sure you know what you want to say and what outcome you’re hoping for.

We’ve included a few top tips in this guide to give you some ideas about what you can discuss during your meeting. And if you’d like more advice, just get in touch with Macmillan’s Campaigns team – you can find our contact details at the end of this guide.

When you meet your MP, you might like to talk about:

- your own cancer experience, or that of someone close to you
- Macmillan’s Time to Choose campaign asks, as outlined at the beginning of this guide
- issues with cancer care in your local area
- how you would like your MP to support you – for example, by writing to your local hospital to raise an issue, contacting local agencies, such as your council or health authority, writing to the Minister who is responsible for the issue you’ve raised or asking Parliamentary Questions to find out what’s going on with the issue.
You could ask your MP to tell you what they plan to do to help improve cancer care this Parliament. If they are a Conservative MP, you could ask how they will help ensure their party keeps its election pledges. And if they are an MP for any other party you can ask how they will hold the Government to account.

We have more detailed questions to help you plan your discussion – find them here: macmillan.org.uk/meetyourmp

**Some tips for the meeting:**
- write down your key points and topics in advance to make sure you cover everything
- have all your facts and figures to hand
- consider printing a short summary of your points to leave behind.

If you’d like to talk about the commitments the Government has made to improving cancer care in response to Macmillan’s *Time to Choose* campaign, you can find all of the information you need on our website, macmillan.org.uk/ge2015. You can even find information and statistics relevant to your area by contacting the Campaigns team.

After your meeting try to send a thank you letter or email as soon as you can. You can use this as an opportunity to remind your MP of any commitments made during your discussion. And don’t forget to let our Campaigns team know how you got on – you can find the contact details below.

**Where can I find out more?**

We hope this guide has given you the inspiration and the know-how you need to get involved in campaigning with Macmillan and to meet your newly elected MP.

If you’d like to find out more about promoting Macmillan’s campaigns locally, we’ve got some great free resources you can use. Visit be.macmillan.org.uk/campaigns to download our Campaigns guide book – it’s a really useful tool that’s guaranteed to help you campaign successfully.

And if you have any questions or need some advice, please don’t hesitate to contact our Campaigns team. Just drop us an email at campaigns@macmillan.org.uk or give us a call on 020 7840 7840. We’ll be happy to help.

Thanks for choosing to campaign with Macmillan. Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. And, despite the fact that it will affect nearly all of us in one way or another, it can still feel like the loneliest place. But together we can choose a future where no one has to face cancer alone.