

WORK SUPPORT ROUTE GUIDE

Helping professionals talk to
people about work and cancer



Talking about work and cancer

This booklet is for health and social care professionals. It aims to help you support people living with cancer with work-related concerns and give them useful guidance. The booklet suggests relevant questions you could ask them, recommends responses and lists further sources of support.

It is estimated that 890,000 people of working age were living with cancer in the UK in 2015. This number is set to increase to 1,150,000 by 2030. These people may need to make many difficult decisions about work. Having discussions about work as soon as possible after a cancer diagnosis can help prevent problems. There is strong evidence that work is good for well-being and helps recovery and rehabilitation.

You do not need to be an employment expert to talk about work, and the conversation does not have to take up a lot of your time. The important thing is that you include work in your conversations with people living with cancer, and encourage them to consider their options.

If you are using a holistic needs assessment (HNA) to find out more about someone's concerns, work may be one of the issues they raise. This booklet will help you direct people to the right information for them.

Starting a work conversation

To get started, ask the person living with cancer which of these options best describes their employment status:

A

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on long-term sick leave**
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Self-employed
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A

In employment or on long-term sick leave

This section will help you support someone with cancer who wants to keep working during or after treatment.



Have you spoken to your employer about staying in work during treatment or returning to work after treatment?

Yes

Do you know your legal rights at work following your diagnosis?

Yes

Are you considering a change in career or early retirement?

No

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No

Talking to your employer as soon as possible can help deal with your needs. If you are not sure what to say, you can start by talking with a Macmillan work support adviser, a trade union representative or a family member or friend.

Also think about the best person to speak to at work and if you would prefer to do this by phone or email.

No

A law called the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 protects you from discrimination (being treated less favourably) at work because you have cancer. If your employer knows you have been diagnosed with cancer, they must make reasonable adjustments to help you do your job.

Examples of reasonable adjustments could include giving you time off for medical appointments, allowing you to work different hours or making changes to your job description to remove tasks that you would find hard to do because of the cancer.

For more information about the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and your rights at work, you can order Macmillan's free booklet **Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer**. You can also talk to a Macmillan work support adviser.

The Labour Relations Agency can give you impartial, confidential advice about your rights at work (see page 20).

Yes

If you would like to change your job or career, Careers Service NI can help you update your CV (see page 19). They can also give you tips about interviews and finding work.

Volunteering may also be a good way to learn new skills. For information about volunteering and help finding opportunities, contact Do-it or Volunteer Now (see page 20).

Early retirement may also be an option if you belong to an occupational pension scheme. You may want to talk to an independent financial adviser or a Macmillan financial guide.

Have you and your employer agreed a return-to-work plan?



Yes



Do you know where to find further information and support?

→ No →

Making a return-to-work plan with your employer can help you agree the best way to support your return to work. The plan may include a phased return, different working hours or adjustments to your workplace or role.

For advice and support, talk to your human resources (HR) or occupational health team, if you have one.

You can talk to a Macmillan work support adviser for guidance on agreeing adjustments with your employer. Macmillan also has online and paper resources that provide further information (see page 19).

→ No →

If cancer affects your ability to do your job, you can get guidance and financial support from the Disability Employment Service within the Department for Communities (see page 19).

The government scheme Access to Work (NI) may be able to pay for special equipment, adaptations and transport to and from work (see page 19). To apply for help through the Access to Work (NI) scheme, contact the Preparation for Work Programmes Branch of the Department for Communities (see page 20).

You can also talk to an employment service adviser at your local Jobs and Benefits office or JobCentre (see page 20), a trade union representative or a Macmillan work support adviser.

For a list of all the services mentioned in this section, see pages 18 to 20. Please print or photocopy this list and give it to the person you are helping.



B

Out of work

This section will help you support someone with cancer who is planning to get back into work.

Are you ready to start looking for work?



Are you worried about going back to work?



Would you like to know more about the financial support and benefits you may be able to get?

→ Yes →

For help returning to work, contact your local Jobs and Benefits office or JobCentre (see page 20). You will be introduced to an employment service adviser. They can help you search and apply for jobs and prepare for interviews. You can also register with recruitment agencies. You can find them on the high street or online. To claim Jobseeker's Allowance, contact your local Jobs and Benefits or Social Security office.

If you would like to change job or career, Careers Service NI can help you update your CV (see page 19). They can give you tips about interviews and finding work. Volunteering may also be a good way to learn new skills. For information about volunteering and help finding opportunities, contact Do-it or Volunteer Now (see page 20).

→ Yes →

Self-management courses can help you regain your confidence after treatment. Macmillan's How to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) programme is a free, interactive course. It is usually taught face to face as part of a group, over 6 weeks.

Counselling can also help. To find out more, visit a Macmillan information and support centre or speak to your GP.

Macmillan's free **Work and cancer** booklet explains your rights at work under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 if you have cancer. This booklet explains recruitment, fair treatment and going back to work. You can also talk to a Macmillan work support adviser.

→ Yes →

You can speak to a Macmillan welfare rights adviser about the support you may be able to get. You can also find information about benefits at gov.uk/browse/benefits

Your local Jobs and Benefits office or JobCentre can put together a plan to help you slowly come off benefits and get back to work (see page 20).

For guidance about mortgages, insurance and pensions, talk to a Macmillan financial guide. If you have a personal insurance policy, contact your insurers to find out if you could make a claim to support yourself until you get back into work.

For a list of all the services mentioned in this section, see pages 18 to 20. Please print or photocopy this list and give it to the person you are helping.



C

Self-employed

This section will help you support someone with cancer who is self-employed. They may worry about closing their business or having to start their career all over again. This section explains some of the options and support available.

Do you want to stay self-employed?

↓
No
↓

Would you like advice on changing your career, volunteering or early retirement?

↓
No
↓

Would you like to know more about the financial support and benefits you may be able to get?

→ Yes →

Managing self-employment with the effects of cancer and its treatment can be challenging. If you are struggling with side effects or symptoms, such as tiredness, there are services that can help. For example, you may want to try occupational therapy or physiotherapy.

Macmillan's free booklet **Self-employment and cancer** has lots of advice about managing your workload and finances. You can also contact NI Business Info, for free professional and financial advice for businesses (see page 20).

→ Yes →

If you would like to change career, Careers Service NI can help you update your CV (see page 19). They can also give you tips about interviews and finding work.

Volunteering may also be a good way to learn new skills. For information about volunteering and help finding opportunities, contact Do-it or Volunteer Now (see page 20).

For guidance about early retirement and what this could mean for you financially, talk to a Macmillan financial guide. You can also talk to an independent financial adviser.

→ Yes →

You can speak to a Macmillan welfare rights adviser about what financial help you may be able to get. If cancer affects your ability to do your job, the government Access to Work (NI) scheme may provide support and funding (see page 19).

For guidance about mortgages, loans, insurance and pensions, talk to a Macmillan financial guide.

If you have a personal insurance policy, contact your insurers to find out if you could make a claim to support yourself while you get back into work.

For a list of all the services mentioned in this section, see pages 18 to 20. Please print or photocopy this list and give it to the person you are helping.

Useful services

Support from Macmillan

Macmillan Support Line

0808 808 00 00 (7 days a week, 8am to 8pm)

The Macmillan Support Line has trained experts who can give people with cancer and their loved ones emotional, practical, clinical, financial and work support.

Financial guidance

0808 808 00 00

(Mon to Fri, 8am to 6pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/your-finances

You can talk to a Macmillan financial guide for help with managing your finances. They can give you information about mortgages, insurance, pensions, planning ahead and more.

Welfare rights

0808 808 00 00

(Mon to Fri, 8am to 8pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/benefits-and-financial-support

You can talk to a Macmillan welfare rights adviser about the benefits and grants that you may be able to claim.

Work support

0808 808 00 00

(Mon to Fri, 8am to 6pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk/workandcancer

Macmillan has a range of information about work and cancer. You can also talk to a Macmillan work support adviser, who can help you understand your rights at work. They can give you information and guidance on talking to your employer and agreeing adjustments at work. They can also answer questions about sick pay or taking time off. If you have more complex needs, they can refer you to one-off legal advice.

Free booklets and leaflets

0808 808 00 00

(7 days a week, 8am to 8pm)

be.macmillan.org.uk/work

Macmillan has free booklets about work and cancer, including **Work and cancer**, **Questions to ask about work and cancer**, **Working while caring for someone with cancer**, **Your rights at work when you are affected by cancer** and **Self-employment and cancer**.

You can order these online or by calling us. We can also provide information in audio, eBook, easy read, Braille, large print and translations at www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or by phone.

Information and support centres

www.macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres

You can visit your local information and support centre with questions about cancer, or just for a chat. The trained experts and volunteers at the centre can also tell you about other local support services, such as counselling.

Self-management courses

www.learnzone.org.uk

Macmillan has free courses to help people affected by cancer manage everyday concerns. For example, our Help to Overcome Problems Effectively (HOPE) course focuses on rebuilding confidence after cancer treatment.

Other services

Access to Work (NI)

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/access-work-practical-help-work

This government programme can help you if your health affects your ability to get a new job. It can help if you are self-employed or employed and have difficulties at work. You may be offered a grant to help pay for practical support at work.

Benefits and financial support

www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/money-tax-and-benefits/benefits-and-financial-support

This website can help you find out which benefits you may be able to get, and if you can claim tax credits.

Careers Service NI

0300 200 7820

www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

This service provides tools and advice to help you make decisions about work and plan your next career step.

Department for Communities – Disability Employment Service

www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/finding-employment/help-find-employment

If your health affects the way you do your job, this service can give you advice and financial support.

Tip: It may help to write down any local services that could help you.

**Department for Communities
– Preparation for Work
Programmes Branch**

Access to Work enquiries:

028 9072 6756

**[www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/
content/disability-employment-
service](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/disability-employment-service)**

This service explains how to apply for help with the costs of practical support at work through the Access to Work (NI) scheme.

NI Business Info

www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk

This organisation offers professional and financial advice for businesses.

JobCentre Online NI

www.jobcentreonline.com

This is the public Employment Service website in Northern Ireland. It has a job search database, which lists all the Jobs and Benefits offices' and JobCentres' current vacancies. You can visit this website to search and apply for jobs and find details of work-related benefits.

**Jobs and Benefits offices,
JobCentres and Social
Security offices**

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/
jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-
and-social-security-offices](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices)**

This website lists the contact details of local Jobs and Benefits offices, JobCentres and Social Security offices. They can help you get back into work and apply for Jobseeker's Allowance.

Labour Relations Agency

03300 555 300

www.lra.org.uk

This organisation provides impartial and confidential advice on employment relations.

Volunteering

www.do-it.org.uk

www.nidirect.gov.uk/volunteering

www.volunteernow.co.uk

These organisations can give you information about volunteering. You can also find opportunities near you.



This booklet is for health and social care professionals. It aims to help you support people living with cancer with concerns about work. It includes questions you can ask, recommended responses and further sources of support.

We're here to help people with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws their way, we're right there with them.

People living with cancer can get help through our support line, our information and support centres, our information booklets and our Online Community.

We also work together with healthcare professionals like you to offer opportunities to develop and learn, so you can keep providing the best treatment and support. For more information, visit macmillan.org.uk/patientsupport

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

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