

Accessing Support: Work-related Problems and Concerns

It is common to find that your work life is affected by cancer in some way: side effects of treatment can cause fatigue or nausea, and the emotional impact of receiving a cancer diagnosis can leave you feeling overwhelmed. Depending on your diagnosis and reaction to treatment, you may or may not feel able to work. For some people, continuing to work provides a sense of normality which can be comforting, however for others the idea of work can feel like too much on top of everything else that is going on, or you may be too physically ill to return to work. The resources below have information on balancing work and cancer, guidance on what reasonable adjustments are and how you can request them, and potential avenues for financial help if you are considering reducing your working hours or stopping work altogether.



Below is a list of organisations who may be able to offer you some support, as well as some resources that you may find helpful to read/listen to. The range and quality of services/support available from such organisations may vary. This list has been gathered as signposting only, and The Royal Marsden cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by an organisation listed or the quality of their services.

If you have any questions or would like further advice/guidance about where to seek specialist help in your local area, you can speak with a member of your Royal Marsden treatment team or the Adult Psychological Support Service.

Work and Cancer – Maggie’s

This webpage includes information on various aspects to consider when dealing with work related issues after a cancer diagnosis, including taking time off, money worries, choosing to work or not, and many more.

Maggie’s also have a Benefit Advisors who can guide you through the process of claiming the benefits you are entitled to.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/our-centres/>

Citizens Advice Bureau – Asking your employer for changes to help you if you’re disabled

From the point of first diagnosis cancer is legally considered a disability in the UK. Due the status of cancer as a disability, your employer is obligated to make reasonable adjustments to



support you. This article outlines what sorts of things can be considered a reasonable adjustment and gives examples of how you might approach your employer about these.

Website link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/discrimination-at-work/discrimination-at-work/taking-action/asking-your-employer-for-changes-to-help-if-youre-disabled/>

Macmillan – How to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

The Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) provides financial support to individuals who have a reduced ability to work due to sickness or disability and do not receive Statutory Sick Pay. The linked website provides guidance on whether you might be eligible to claim the allowance, and how to make an application.

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/benefits-and-financial-support/employment-and-support-allowance/how-to-claim#:~:text=You%20can%20also%20apply%20by,textphone%2C%20call%200800%20328%203419>

Macmillan – Money and Work

Offers links to pages containing information on your employment rights and advice for navigating work and cancer, as well as advice on managing your finances.

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help/financial-and-work>

Macmillan – Talking Cancer - Series 1, Episode 5

A podcast episode in which an individual who had six cancer diagnoses across 30 years is interviewed, and her experience navigating the world of employment is explored (also available as a transcript).

Website link: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/stories-and-media/podcasts/talking-cancer-podcast-work-and-cancer>

Macmillan – Work Support Line

On Monday-Friday 8am-6pm you can call the MacMillan Support Line and inform them that you are looking to speak with a member of the Work Support Service. This service is available to anyone affected by cancer whether employed or self-employed, and they can help you better understand your rights and negotiate adjustments at work. They also may be able to refer you for one-off legal advice should this be required.

Contact at: **0808 808 0000**

Or alternatively you can chat online: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help/chat-online>, or send an email: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/forms/contact-us/ask-macmillan-form.html>



Working with Cancer

A charity that provides coaching sessions about work and cancer to employees, employers and jobseekers. Their website also contains articles, podcasts and newsletters all centred on the challenges around work and cancer.

Website link: <https://workingwithcancer.co.uk/contact-us/>

YouTube – Balancing Work & Cancer: Managing Long Term Stress

An hour-long webinar exploring stress management strategies for people trying to balance work and cancer. Strategies include self-compassion, educating yourself, and identifying triggers. Please note that by clicking on ‘Cancer and Careers’ you can access a host of other webinars and advice on working with cancer (you can also use this link: <https://www.youtube.com/@CancerandCareers>).

Website link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHK8UZxhHV8>

Brain Trust Charity – Employment and Brain Tumours

The article discusses how brain tumours may elicit difficulties or changes at work for a variety of reasons. It then provides links to several PDFs offering advice for a range of scenarios such as how to speak to employers, what reasonable adjustments to the work environment can be requested, and how employers can support their employees during this time.

Website link: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/maintaining-your-independence/employment-and-brain-tumours/>

Other APSS Information and Resources

The Adult Psychological Support Service has a range of signposting information sheets on topics such as: coping at different stages of the cancer pathway, supporting your physical and emotional wellbeing, relationships, and information specific to certain types of cancer.

You can view the signposting information sheets on The Royal Marsden’s [Patient Information Library](#) and the [Adult Psychological Support Service Website](#) (under ‘Further information and resources’). You can also request a copy of these by emailing Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephoning **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton).

Additional support services

Cancer Care Map

An online database of cancer support services. You can search by postcode or by particular themes e.g. cancer type.

Website link: <https://www.cancercaremap.org/>



Maggie's Cancer Centres

Cancer care centres with multiple locations, including The Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and Charing Cross Hospital, West London. Workshops, groups, information and one-to-one counselling available.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/>

Phone number: **0300 123 1801**

NHS Talking Therapies

NHS website to help you find your local psychological talking therapies service based on your GP address. Your local NHS talking therapies service can be helpful if you would like psychological support for cancer when you are no longer regularly coming in for appointments at The Royal Marsden, as well as for concerns unrelated to cancer or that predated your cancer and have become worse due to it.

Website link: [Find NHS talking therapies for anxiety and depression - NHS](#)

If you need any specialist and personalised advice about your cancer treatment, symptoms or side effects, please contact The Royal Marsden Hotline. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **020 8915 6899**.

The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service offers short-term, cancer-specific psychological and psychiatric support. You can either self-refer or ask somebody in your Royal Marsden healthcare team to refer you. For more information, visit [Adult Psychological Support Service | The Royal Marsden](#). Alternatively, contact us directly on **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea), **020 8661 3006** (Sutton), or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk.



If you have ideas for other signposting or information sheets, or if you would like to be involved in working with APSS to improve the service we offer, please scan the QR code to see more about our patient and public involvement, or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephone 020 7808 2777 (Chelsea) / 020 8661 3006 (Sutton) with your ideas.

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