

# Working With Cancer News



## Here’s what we’ve been up to and what’s to come!

Autumn is always a time for reflection and we hope our newsletter will provide a lot of food for thought and inspiration.

We start by looking at the continued growth of people of working age with cancer. It was once described as a tsunami about to affect the workforce and we’re here to help businesses to prepare for the continued changes ahead.

We’re also very pleased to share news of our events and recent activities. We’ve spoken at conferences, contributed to research reports and given advice through many interviews. We firmly hope that sharing our expertise will help many more businesses to understand the challenges and opportunities of supporting those with cancer in the workforce.

Our big news for the autumn will come in October when we celebrate our tenth anniversary and unveil The Bevan Employer and Cancer Report . We have named our report in honour of Steven Bevan a Working With Cancer Ambassador and close friend. An obituary in Personnel Today said Steven was known for providing deep expertise and insight into how wellbeing at work could be improved. We are also celebrating the life of Harmer Parr, a former teacher and Ofsted Inspector who blogged brilliantly for us to share his cancer journey to help others. We also want to help those trying to obtain government funding for work coaching. Read “The Last Word” for our views.

**FOUNDER - BARBARA WILSON**

### In this newsletter you can expect:

One million people of working age with cancer

New ideas for mBC

WWC research alert

WWC in the news

Free webinars

Making connections and celebrating Lives

Perci Health partnership

Latest research and news

The Last Word



## One million people of working age now living with cancer

Working With Cancer estimates that more than one million people of working age are now living with cancer in the UK.

In 2015 the number was 890,000 and Macmillan has forecast it will rise to 1.15 million by 2030. Experts also say that an additional 700,000 people a year are trying to juggle work while caring for people with cancer. The growth of people of working age affected by cancer is reflected in research published this June by Cancer Research UK. It found that the number of under 50 year olds being diagnosed

with cancer has risen 24% in the past two decades, higher than other age groups. That means that 35,000 under 50s are now being diagnosed with cancer every year, almost 100 people a day.

That's why forward thinking businesses are preparing. In the past year we've seen the launch of the Working with Cancer pledge and we know many more businesses are considering ways they can support and protect their workforce. Ask us how we can help you today.



### New ideas for mBC

Barbara Wilson has contributed to a series of policy briefs as part of a project to develop recommendations for addressing inequalities in access to metastatic breast cancer (mBC) care. The Health Policy Partnership, a specialist health policy research organisation has joined forces with Gilead Sciences Europe and Harwood Levitt Consulting to produce the study. Current policies often do not fully recognise or address the unique challenges of those with mBC and the study will recommend action to address disparities.



### WWC Research Alert

Thank you to everyone who has completed our ground breaking survey on employment practices around cancer in the workplace.

We've had a great response and together with the Institute for Employment Studies we are now working on the report and we'll be unveiling the results in October.

We want the findings to help employers understand the challenges and opportunities for providing effective support, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all solutions.

---

## Working With Cancer in The News



### BCN podcast

Do you want to know more about returning to work after Breast Cancer?

Listen here to our Founder Barbara Wilson chat to Laura Price with her tips and experiences on the [Breast Cancer Now Podcast](#)



### HR Grapevine

“Supporting employers with the big C is part of people management” according to [HR Grapevine](#). “What that looks like in reality is different for every organisation, their size and resources but the key tenets remain the same – empathy, kindness and flexibility” says Barbara Wilson.



### Free webinars

Did you know we regularly run free one hour webinars to help people return to work, or for anyone in a management role to understand how to manage work and cancer.

Join us on one of these dates:

- 10 September
- 12 September
- 3 December
- 5 December
- 12 March
- 13 March

Find out more here: [Webinars](#)



### Personnel Today

How do you support someone's return to work after cancer?

Understand all the challenges and follow best practice policies is the advice from Barbara Wilson's in a recent feature in [Personnel Today](#)



### TTG

A massive thank you to April Hutchison of TTG, Fay Field of EasyJet and Jae Hopkins of Explore Worldwide for sharing their personal experiences of working with cancer at a Travel Trade Gazette event for the travel industry this summer.



# ECONOMIST IMPACT

## Making Connections and Celebrating Lives

As Associate Members of the European Cancer Organisation (ECO) we are contributing to its Survivorship and Quality of Life Network and lobbying for the EU to pass legislation similar to the 2010 Equality Act.

We also contributed to the ECO Inequalities Network discussion on the topic of Women and Cancer, combating financial toxicity and workplace discrimination associated with the female experience of cancer.

Our Head of Policy Veronica Foote has given her guidance at an Economist Impact workshop for pioneering women centric breast cancer care. The Economist Impact group has run workshops across Europe to gather expert insight, to identify gaps and suggest policy priorities and actions.

The findings will be published in a report which will be published later this year.



**Stephen Bevan**

We are proud to say we are naming our forthcoming research study in honour of Stephen Bevan. Stephen passed away this summer. He was a longstanding Working With Cancer Ambassador and Principal Associate at the Institute for Employment Studies. In an article published in his memory this summer, HR Magazine described him as an “employee wellbeing trailblazer”. His clear insights have supported us for many years and he will be greatly missed. Do read his blogs on our website and listen to his podcast with Liz O’Riordan.



**Harmer Parr**

We would also like to celebrate the life of Harmer Parr; a former teacher and Ofsted inspector who kindly shared his cancer experiences with us. In six moving blogs on our website he described his encounters with “Melvyn the persistent melanoma”. During his time at Ofsted he held national responsibility for the development and quality assurance of school inspections and for leading the work on assessing the impact of Ofsted on the education system. Harmer died this summer surrounded by family, he was “calm and laughing” to the end.



## Perci Health Partnership

This autumn Perci Health announced a partnership with Working With Cancer to take a significant step forward in meeting the increasing demand for comprehensive workplace support to enable staff to navigate the challenges of working with cancer. The collaboration means that Perci Health members can now access Working With Cancer coaches directly through its platform. Plus Perci Health has co-developed a range of employer resources designed to empower organisations in creating a more cancer-inclusive culture.

“By combining Working With Cancer’s lived experience and our expertise with clinical cancer care, we’re excited about the meaningful change we can make for those impacted by cancer.”

### Latest research



Cancer as we know is on the rise. These are some recent reports you may find useful to understand the impact on your organisation:

The [BMJ](#) group has published research showing a global surge in cancers in the under 50s over the past three decades with the fastest rise in windpipe and prostate cancers.

The [World Health Organisation](#) published a survey of 115 countries in advance of World Cancer Day and forecast that global cancer case burden would increase from 20 million in 2022 to 35 million by 2050.

### And more news



The changing face of cancer for men is addressed in this wide ranging article in [Men's Health Magazine](#) published in summer 2024

Listen to our Working With Cancer coach Anna Dunn take part in a “Something Big” webinar on 18 October, together with Lindsay Bridges, Global Head of HR, DHL Supply Chain. The series, led by Sally Pritchett of the Something Big agency focuses on delivering positive change in the workplace.

Our Founder Barbara Wilson will also give guidance. [Tune in here](#) for free tickets.



## Last word: Why the government needs to improve Access To Work

We speak to people every day who are concerned and fearful about their return to work after cancer. They may come to us for practical advice about their legal status, or for coaching to help them consider and negotiate their transition back to work.

The crucial element of this support is that people need this advice **before** they return to work.

If support is offered after they've returned, it may simply be too late. They may not have been aware of their legal rights, or fully considered the length and nature of their phased return. They may have encountered bosses who prioritise staff who haven't been ill, over them. Or they may not have had sufficient reasonable adjustments made, or offered to them.

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) "Access To Work" fund is critical in supporting many people to find the funds to get the coaching they need.

But we have a problem. It is currently taking up to 24 weeks for the DWP to approve funding requests for return to work coaching. And the DWP won't backdate the funding to cover coaching before the grant has been approved. There are people who need our support who are still waiting to have their funding request approved after they have gone back to work - long after they needed it. This year the government received between 14,000 and 16,000 requests for Access To Work support every month. We need the new government to tackle these volumes faster and more swiftly.

If someone goes back to work without support and struggles, the chances are they are more likely to become an "economically inactive" statistic. That's not good for the person, the employer, or the country.

Join us and ask your MP how this can be improved.

*Thank you for reading!*

[Workingwithcancer.co.uk](http://Workingwithcancer.co.uk)

[INSTAGRAM](#)  
[LINKEDIN](#)