

HELLO EVERYONE

Welcome to our Spring newsletter.

In this newsletter we are focusing on the results of the WWC/IES 'Living and working with cancer study' we undertook at the end of last year.

The survey report of over 1,200 people living with cancer was published on February 4th, World Cancer Day. You can read the Press Release [here](#) and you can access the full report [here](#).

The key findings are summarised below.

Other items featured are:

- A request to all those of you who have or have had a cancer diagnosis whilst self-employed, or who know someone in this situation, to contact us about your experience.
- An update on our activities in connection with World Cancer Day here in the UK and in Europe.
- An update on our workshop programme for 2022, and in particular our new programme for cancer patients which we successfully piloted in March.

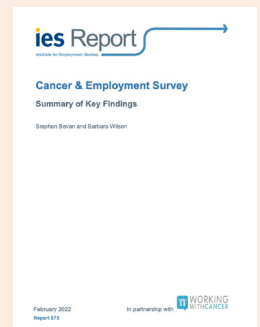


WWC/IES LIVING AND WORKING WITH CANCER STUDY: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of our respondents told us that the mental health consequences of a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment are considerably worse than the physical effects.
- The proportion of people living with cancer who return successfully to work remains disappointingly low.
- The proportion of cancer patients working full time at the point they receive a diagnosis falls significantly after their treatment.
- Among those who have returned to work, knowledge of the 2010 Equality Act and its provisions was low at 57 per cent.
- HR and occupational health professionals are not doing enough to inform employees about the obligation to offer reasonable adjustments and a phased return to work, as well as wider employment rights.



- One-third of respondents did not phase their return to work and one-quarter had to take leave during their treatment.
- Those with advanced or metastatic cancer reported lower levels of support for their return to work.
- The frequency with which healthcare professionals (e.g. GPs, CNSs) discuss return to work is low.
- Among those who have not yet completed their treatment, more than four in five plan to go back to the same job but almost three-quarters of the remainder planned to switch employers.
- Nine in ten of our respondents reported positive experiences of support from their employer and from colleagues BUT those with advanced or metastatic cancer had a poorer experience.
- Among all respondents, where they had already returned to work or were planning to do so, there was strong demand for return-to-work coaching, flexible working including working from home, and reduced duties especially during a phased return.



The survey results tell us that:

1. The experience of a cancer diagnosis and treatment – especially the psychological impact - frequently has a profound effect on working age people, often in ways not commonly appreciated by employers, co-workers and even some healthcare professionals.
2. Many of those with advanced or metastatic cancer are struggling to get return-to-work support which meets their needs.
3. Employers cannot rely solely on the individual compassion of their managers to improve the experiences of colleagues who are working with cancer. They must review and update their sickness policies and practices, embedding within them solid principles of job redesign (in which work tasks are re-ordered to reduce workloads or work intensity), a phased return to work and vocational rehabilitation.



4. Healthcare professionals need to give far more consideration to the possibility that a successful return to work is likely to have positive therapeutic benefits. Returning to work should be regarded as a high priority clinical outcome of cancer care.



Many of these issues had already become apparent to us through our day to day work but it was important to have this verified and validated by the survey.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the study, not only by answering the questions but in providing their detailed comments based on their personal experience. I'm sure it wasn't easy for many of you to do this. All I can say is that we fully intend to build on this work in the months to come and to undertake further studies of this nature in future.

CANCER AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT



One area our study did not address was self-employment (those who work freelance as independent contractors or as part of a partnership or have set up their own limited company or enterprise) and the many challenges people face when

dealing with a cancer diagnosis and treatment. This is clearly an omission given the fact that approx. 4.5 million or 15% of the working population is self-employed.

We have therefore set ourselves the goal of publishing a Best Practice Guide next year for the self-employed, and would welcome from those of you who are or have been self-employed during, with or after cancer, your stories and feedback about:

- Your experiences – good, bad and indifferent
- The key challenges you have faced and how you have dealt with them
- What changes you would like to see in government policy, the benefits system etc to address those challenges.

Would you like to contribute? Please [get in touch](#).

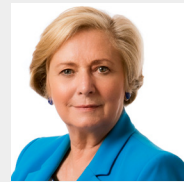
WWC AND WORLD CANCER DAY



After a rather quiet two years for us, this year we were delighted to receive lots of requests to speak at events or run workshops for our UK clients either on 4th February, or during that week, or just during February. This enabled us to considerably widen our reach in raising awareness about the challenges of managing work and cancer.

But please remember that this issue is not confined to one month of the year. Cancer – ‘the emperor of all maladies’ - requires rather more commitment and action from employers than a Lunch and Learn event.

In addition to the above, we are delighted to report that the EU based Transforming Breast Cancer Initiative (TBCT) group of which WWC is a founding member, has made returning to work a key theme for this year's activities. As part of World Cancer Day, the Chair of the group, MEP Frances Fitzgerald published an excellent article ‘Return to Work – A symbol of normality or yet another challenge for cancer patients’.



MEP Fitzgerald writes:

“As a defender of women's rights, I believe breast cancer has a profound impact on women and we need to ensure they can be facilitated to continue to live their lives, both during and after cancer, in both their communities and society.”

You can read the full article [here](#).

WWC WORKSHOP PROGRAMME FOR 2022

This year's Open Workshop programme has got off to an excellent start, particularly our new programme for employees with cancer. Given the extent of the demand **we have added another programme which we will be running on July 5th**. The workshop is free of charge and all we ask is that attendees make a small donation to WWC via our website home page.

The programme helps attendees

- Understand the impact of side effects on managing work and on the journey ‘back to normal’
- Manage their own and their employer's expectations
- Negotiate a return-to-work plan and reasonable adjustments

More details can be found [here](#). |

A full list of our open workshops and master classes for managers, HR and health professionals by [clicking here](#).