

### Hello everyone

Welcome to our January 2021 newsletter.

Although last year was a tough year for all of us, looking back, we achieved a great deal:

- We coached or supported about 200 people many of whom were health professionals with cancer, to whom we offered free coaching and advice between March and July.



- Of the 200 people we supported, over 100 were new coachees in 2020. 31% of this year's new coachees received free coaching.
- We successfully switched to using Zoom to run virtual workshops for commercial and charity clients.
- We made short films about work and cancer - for Kidney Cancer, Kings College Hospital, Leaders in Oncology Care and the Hummingbird Charity.
- We published 4 Best Practice Guides: for Employees with Cancer, Line Managers, Colleagues and Carers and
- Published a Career Coaching Workbook for cancer survivors.
- Widened our influence in Europe; worked increasingly with the European Cancer Patients Coalition, the Transforming Breast Cancer Together Initiative, the Advanced Breast Cancer Coalition and the European Cancer Organisation.

A huge thank you to everyone for your continuing support. Please remember that every penny you spend on our services is either ploughed back into the business or the community. And to demonstrate this ...

We are renewing the offer of **free coaching** to individuals seeking support.



Please contact us at [admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk](mailto:admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk) if you'd like to take up this offer.

### And what have we for you in this edition?

- Blogs by former coachees Clare Slade, a GP, about coming to terms with her cancer diagnosis and Emma Tice a writer and editor about her experience of cancer and setting up a freelance business. We also have a blog by Christine Lydon about her experience of working through treatment.
- An article by Genevieve Isaacson about the UK furlough this January and what you need to know – the rules have been amended significantly.
- An update about the new European Beating Cancer Plan and how we are trying to push forward the need to give cancer survivors the right to return to work after a cancer diagnosis and treatment.
- We want to raise awareness of the needs of those with advanced or metastatic cancer trying to return to work or find work after an 'incurable but treatable' diagnosis.



**Fingers crossed that some of you might be able to help us!**

### Cancer and Coaching: lessons in self-kindness and learning to embrace the unknown

Clare Slade



Claire Slade, a WWC coachee and former senior partner in a GP practice, has written a blog about trying to come to terms with her bowel cancer diagnosis.

'As a 40-year-old, who has just retired from her GP partnership, you would be forgiven for thinking I might not be the best advert for coaching through Working With Cancer. However, you couldn't be further from the truth.

In November 2019, at the end of a year of investigations for anaemia, I was diagnosed with bowel cancer. I was a 39-year-old GP partner, married, with 3 young children. Life had, until that point, been extremely full, busy, and fun, but I had the work-life balance thing sussed. I...was...superwoman.'

**"The coaching helped me to regain control"**

The full article can be found [here](#).

## Getting back to work and going freelance after a diagnosis of breast cancer

Emma Tice



Emma Tice is a writer and editor who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017. In her blog she discusses the difficulties of dealing with a changing breast cancer diagnosis and her experience of setting up a business in the middle of the pandemic.

‘Like many, my cancer diagnosis came out of the blue. I’d just celebrated my 50th birthday with a trip to New York and then a month later I had my first mammogram. After that my world changed.

I had no symptoms and didn’t feel ill but found myself going through a serious of tests and was told I had an early form of breast cancer and would need a mastectomy. It was hoped that surgery was all I would need.



But 15th August 2017 is a day my husband and I will never forget. It was the day I received the pathology results from the surgery. My consultant broke the news – “I’m afraid the results are not good”.

The full article can be found [here](#).

## Raising the awareness of those with advanced or metastatic cancer who want to continue working

We are increasingly working with people who have advanced or metastatic cancer who are returning to work or looking for employment.

People in this group can survive and work successfully for many years post diagnosis (if they wish to and have the opportunities to do this)) but often face what I call ‘well-meaning prejudice’ at work. By this I mean they are often advised to give up work and focus on ‘fighting’ their illness. In some cases, employees may come under pressure to resign, retire or take redundancy. In other cases, because people with a terminal diagnosis often look perfectly well, they may face disbelief or even abuse, for example, if they use a Blue Badge.

This year we are working to raise awareness of this issue and as part of this, I will be contributing to a paper about this with Fatima Cardoso, President of the Advanced Breast Cancer Global Alliance.

**In addition to this, we are working on two other closely related projects:**

1. Developing a workshop programme about supporting those who are working with metastatic or advanced cancer for employers, patients and for health professionals.

Please register your interest by contacting us at [admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk](mailto:admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk).



2. To raise awareness, Liz O’Riordan and I want to publish some photos of all those of you who have a diagnosis of advanced/metastatic cancer and are still working, either at work or, given the pandemic, working at home.

We are aiming to put all the photos into a poster or video and to ask the question ‘*which one of these people has advanced or metastatic cancer?*’ as a way of demonstrating the fallacy that people with an advanced/metastatic cancer diagnosis look terribly ill and can’t continue working. We would also like to publish some stories.

So, if you are ‘up’ for this please get in touch with us at [admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk](mailto:admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk).



## UK furlough: what you need to know

Génevie Kuiper-Isaacson

As we navigate another lockdown that may last until 31 March 2021, WWC’s Associate, Génevie Kuiper-Isaacson, provides some essential guidance on the amended furlough rules, for example, ‘parents that are staying at home to care for their children can request to be put on furlough. A position that was previously unclear.’

The full article can be found [here](#).



## Virtual Open Workshop; 'How to facilitate a successful return to work after cancer during COVID-19'



Next date: **4th of March 2021** (10:00 - 12:30)

For more information contact [admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk](mailto:admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk).

## Navigating a career after cancer

Christine Lydon is an associate content director at FleishmanHillard Fishburn and is also co-chair of Omnicom's Open DisAbility steering group.



There is, of course, no ideal time to be diagnosed with cancer. After all, in a typical year, there are weddings to attend, birthdays to celebrate and careers to forge. Who would welcome the upheaval of a cancer diagnosis?

It was no different for me. At the time of my diagnosis in September 2015, I had a career in healthcare communications that I loved, with a wonderful team around me, and was in the middle of an interesting and busy project.

I had been referred to the breast clinic for assessment. I'd found a lump some months earlier. I hadn't been unduly concerned – I'd read the stats, the likelihood of cancer seemed minimal – but knew it was smart to have it checked. I left the hospital later that day bruised and bandaged after a mammogram, ultrasound and biopsies. Poor timing or not, I was to be diagnosed with an aggressive Grade 3 tumour a week later.

To read about Christine's return to work and what helped her make it work read more [here](#).

## The European Cancer Plan

On 4 February 2020, the European Commission started the public consultation of the plan at an event entitled 'Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Let's Strive for More' in the European Parliament in Brussels.



The four pillars of the Europe Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP) are:

- prevention
- early diagnosis
- treatment, and
- follow-up care

The plan is to be published in early February.

Post Brexit, we are delighted to be able to continue working with various EU organisations contributing to the Plan, focusing on getting the EU to recognise the importance of being able to return to work not only for those with primary cancer but also those with advanced or metastatic cancer.



As mentioned in the December newsletter, WWC became a supporter of ECO (European Cancer Organisation) last year and was able to contribute to a paper prepared by its

Survivorship and Quality of Life Network: Free from Cancer: Achieving Quality of Life for All Cancer Patients and Survivors. Following this we contributed some slides to ECO's President, Dr Matti Aapro, who spoke at the European Parliament's Special Committee on Beating Cancer on 11th January. At the hearing Dr Aapro emphasised the need for Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to achieve a comprehensive approach to address the concerns of patients and carers across Europe.

[Here](#) was his message and [here](#) are the slides we submitted.

## And finally.....

Get in touch if you or your organisation needs support in managing work and cancer.

We can support you with:

1. Individual **coaching**, including support of your line manager and team,
2. (Bespoke) **training** and **workshops**,
3. **Consultancy** or any advice for your organisation on return to work policies and processes.

WWC is always happy to arrange speakers for conferences and events – if you would like to book us for an event, do please [contact us](#).

And if you would like further information about our services please contact:

[admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk](mailto:admin@workingwithcancer.co.uk)

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