

HELLO EVERYONE

Hello everyone and welcome to our October (autumn) newsletter. As many of you will know this month is Breast Cancer Awareness month. We support anyone with any cancer at any stage but there is no denying that many of the people we work with have had breast cancer.



In this edition we include:

- A brief update about the #working with cancer Pledge campaign including a link to a new video about the work that we do. Do feel free to share the video more widely.
- An article by Stephen Bevan about cancer survival and why staying positive is never enough.
- A link to a video interview with Fiona Mackinlay about her experience of working with cancer.
- A profile about our new WWC Associate, Jo Larbie.
- An article by Harmer Parr about how the NHS saved his life.
- A link to a recent article in the Independent about the employment difficulties parents can face when their children are receiving cancer treatment.
- An update about our workshop programme for 2023/2024

THE PUBLICIS #WORKINGWITHCANCER PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

Almost 1000 companies have now signed up to the Working With Cancer Pledge campaign, of which about 10% are based in the UK. The campaign is running for several more months, so if you haven't had the time to look, please visit our website [here](#) to find out more, or the Pledge website [here](#) where you can see listed all the companies which have signed up and the pledges they have made.

In the meantime, Publicis helped WWC make a short video about the work that we do. You can view the video by clicking on this [link](#).



FIONA MACKINLAY TALKS ABOUT HER CANCER EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH CANCER

Earlier this year I recorded an interview with Fiona Mackinlay, a higher education professional at one of the UK's largest universities,



about her experience of returning to work after a diagnosis of kidney cancer in 2017.

In this interview Fiona speaks among other things of feeling very alone, the taboo that still surrounds cancer and how coaching helped her with her return to work. You can watch the video [here](#).

CANCER SURVIVAL - WHY STAYING POSITIVE IS NEVER ENOUGH

STEPHEN BEVAN



Our Ambassador, Stephen Bevan, was diagnosed with terminal Oesophageal cancer in December last year. Here he talks about positive thinking and while it is useful it can also be problematic.

"Having been a cancer patient for over 5 years now, it is very noticeable that most family members, friends and colleagues appear much more at ease when I am cheerful and upbeat. I think this is partly because it is reassuring to them if I look like I'm coping well, taking the fight to the cancer and trying to stay strong for those closest to me.

But even as I approach the [final stages](#) of what we euphemistically call my 'cancer journey', so many of my interactions with others are bounded by my middle-class instinct not to cause them any awkwardness. In answer to the perfectly normal 'How are you?' question I still offer a limp and often disingenuous 'OK thanks'. Part of me feels a perverse obligation to protect others from the discomfort of having to acknowledge my looming demise, my cancer pain, my premature separation from my family, the discomfort of my cancer treatment and my undignified transformation into an emaciated figure with no stamina and almost no remaining hair.

This impulse to shield others from all of this is partly pragmatic. I don't want to have to explain my terminal diagnosis to everyone, nor do I want to cause people unnecessary distress when they realise how crass the 'how are you?' question can sound when no offence is ever meant by it. Aside from pragmatism, keeping the conversation light on detail and even lighter on self-pity makes it easier to shift the topic quickly on to the weather or Strictly Come Dancing."

To read the full blog, click [here](#).



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW ASSOCIATE JO LARBIE

We are delighted that Jo Larbie joined us as an Associate this summer.

As an executive coach, Jo draws on over twenty-five years of professional and personal experience as a lawyer, human resources and organisational development director and academic, operating at senior level in leading international professional services firms.

Jo specialises in inclusion to create more diverse and inclusive workplaces. She is passionate about working with organisations to successfully retain, develop and increase the number of talented BAME women and men, and non-BAME women, into senior and leadership roles.

As a result of her personal cancer experiences, Jo is committed to helping people to learn from their experience and to rebuild their lives beyond cancer.

Jo is a Non-Executive Director, Vice-Chair, and Audit Chair for an NHS Foundation Trust and is also co-author of *How to Make Partner and Still Have a Life* (2019, 3rd. ed), Kogan Page.

Jo is a passionate gardener and loves walking, travel, food and wine.

AORTA: A GOOD NEWS STORY BY HARMER PARR

Harmer Parr is a former teacher and Ofsted inspector. 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. This is his third blog for us, on this occasion not about his melanoma but about another recent health scare where the NHS 'played a blinder' in helping him to survive.

"Readers of my previous ramblings may remember that my principal private assassin used to be Melvyn the Melanoma, who's been trying to kill me for years. He's taken the gradual approach, quietly growing tumours and cultivating his garden, as Voltaire advised. No-one can fault his diligence. However, he's been completely upstaged by my exploding aorta, and is probably impressed by its direct approach of going straight for the jugular." You can read the full blog [here](#).

MY DAUGHTER GOT LIFE-THREATENING CANCER AND I LOST MY JOB AS A RESULT

Christina Harris is petitioning the government for better employment rights for parents with sick children when her 10-year-old daughter Skye was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia, requiring urgent life-saving treatment and daily chemotherapy.



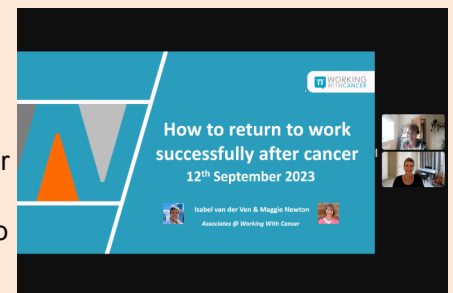
"I suggested coming in two days to the office and working from home three days a week but there was no flexibility at all." A single mother who lost her job after her daughter became critically ill with cancer is calling for better support from employers.

You can read the article which was published in the Independent on 8 September [here](#).



WWC WORKSHOP PROGRAMME FOR 2023 AND EARLY 2024

Our free Open Workshop programmes for cancer patients and for employers continues to be very popular and the feedback we get is excellent.



We now have new dates published for early 2024, you can book a place by clicking [here](#).

We also run a variety of bespoke webinars and half day workshops for companies (employees, HR, line managers, cancer buddy networks, mental health first aider), for health professionals and for charities.

Do please get in touch with us if you would like to find out more by contacting us via the website or by [here](#).