

WWC PARTNERS WITH TEENAGE CANCER TRUST TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE MANAGE WORK AFTER CANCER

Our Associate Sarah Dawson Is Training and Coaching Young Cancer Survivors to Manage Work and Cancer

A cancer diagnosis is devastating at any age, but for a young person it can cause a particular kind of anguish. How do you face conversations and situations most adults would struggle with, before you've even had any life experience of your own?

Even after treatment is over, teenagers and young adults report that getting on with life can be as difficult as the diagnosis itself. A new routine, a sense of isolation, and fears about the cancer returning can leave people feeling anxious, confused and angry about what cancer has taken from them. Facing work after treatment can be particularly daunting, which is why WWC has partnered with Teenage Cancer Trust to help.

Sarah Dawson is a business coach and trainer, and an associate at Working With Cancer. She has been contributing to 'Way Forward', a residential programme run by Teenage Cancer Trust. Way Forward is a two day event delivered in different locations around the UK for young people who have finished cancer treatment. The programme provides practical and emotional support, covering issues like work, relationships and body image.

Sarah has been delivering a session at Way Forward events about work after cancer, and in addition every attendee is given the opportunity to request a free one-to-one coaching session with Working With Cancer after the programme. Sarah's son Al died of primary bone cancer, Osteosarcoma, aged 16. She uses her personal experience, as well as her skills as a professional coach, to help young people cope with the challenges and understand their rights at work.

Sarah said: "I talk to people about the practicalities of work after cancer. We discuss the legislation that protects them at work, how and when to talk to employers and colleagues about their experiences and what support they can ask for. I help people to understand that there's no such thing as the 'normal' or 'right' way of doing things, but that they can take control of their futures at work.

"The feedback from the Working With Cancer sessions has been so positive," said Gary Doig, support manager at Teenage Cancer Trust. "Attendees learn some essential information, and it helps give them the confidence to talk to their employers and colleagues."

In addition to the Way Forward events, Working With Cancer is providing coaching sessions to young people with cancer, in partnership with the Teenage Cancer Trust. Sarah Dawson is currently coaching four young cancer patients as they finish treatment and face a new life after cancer.

"The opportunity to coach these young people is a huge privilege, and it's inspiring to witness what people go on to achieve after cancer." Sarah continued. "I can combine my experience of being a Mum to a teenager with cancer and my professional skills as a coach. Helping people develop confidence, hope and enthusiasm for life is a positive way of remembering Al and keeping his legacy alive."