

# Working With Cancer News



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

Cancer is rarely out of the news. We know it's affecting many more people, as well as more people of working age. But it's often not clear how businesses are handling long-term conditions such as cancer. That's why the recent launch of our Bevan Report into Improving Employer Support for Those Working With Cancer is such an important milestone. We named this report in honour of Steven Bevan, a close friend as well as an Ambassador for our work and a Principal Researcher at the Institute for Employment Studies. So we were also proud to partner with the Institute of Employment Studies to produce this research. We have also been out and about speaking on podcasts, to magazines and audiences letting the world know about the results of our research and we hope you'll enjoy reading some of the articles we've linked to in this newsletter.

But it's one thing to say we need to do more. It's another to help businesses know what to do.

That's why we are launching a free webinar on 6 March 2025 where we'll talk through the lessons of our research and outline the best practice steps to address those lessons so you are ready and able to handle cancer in the workforce. Do sign up to hear from Veronica Foote our Head of Policy and Consulting, Maggie Newton our Head of Training and Louise Barrett our Head of Coaching.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. Together let's make 2025 a year we can do more to support those with cancer.

*Barbara Wilson*

**FOUNDER - BARBARA WILSON**

### In this newsletter you can expect:

Improving Employer Support for those Working with Cancer: The Bevan Report

Research Webinar

Advanced Breast Cancer

Under 50s: Cancer on the Rise

WWC In the News

Free Webinars

Disability Charter

NHS Foundation Trust Case Study

The Last Word

**Figure 7: Organisational barriers to supporting an employee working with cancer**

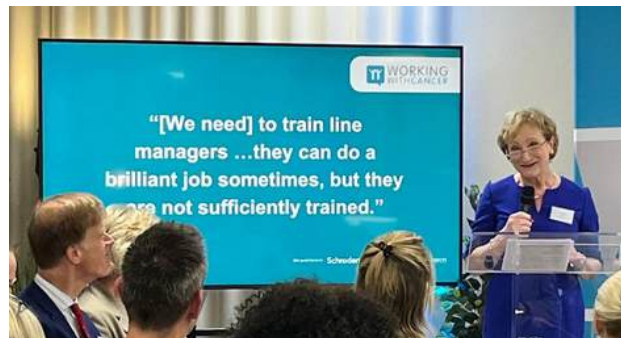
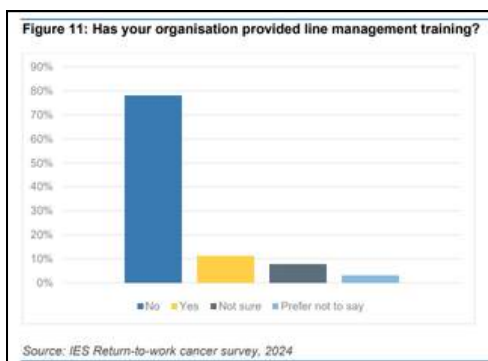


Source: IES Return-to-work cancer survey, 2024

## Improving Employer Support for those Working With Cancer: The Bevan Report launched winter 2024

Our new [research report](#) reveals that many HR managers are ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of cancer and long-term health issues in the workplace. Our report was produced in conjunction with the [Institute for Employment Studies](#) (IES) and found that, of those surveyed,

- **96%** of respondents reported that their companies do not have cancer specific policies
- Only **18%** reported collecting data on the number of employees with a cancer diagnosis.
- **78%** stated their line managers had not received training on how to support employees living with cancer.
- **48%** of respondents expressed concern about line managers saying the wrong thing
- **31%** lacked confidence in the ability of their line managers to have difficult conversations.
- Only half (**54%**) of respondents knew about the Access to Work scheme
- A quarter (**25%**) reported a lack of understanding of disability legislation.

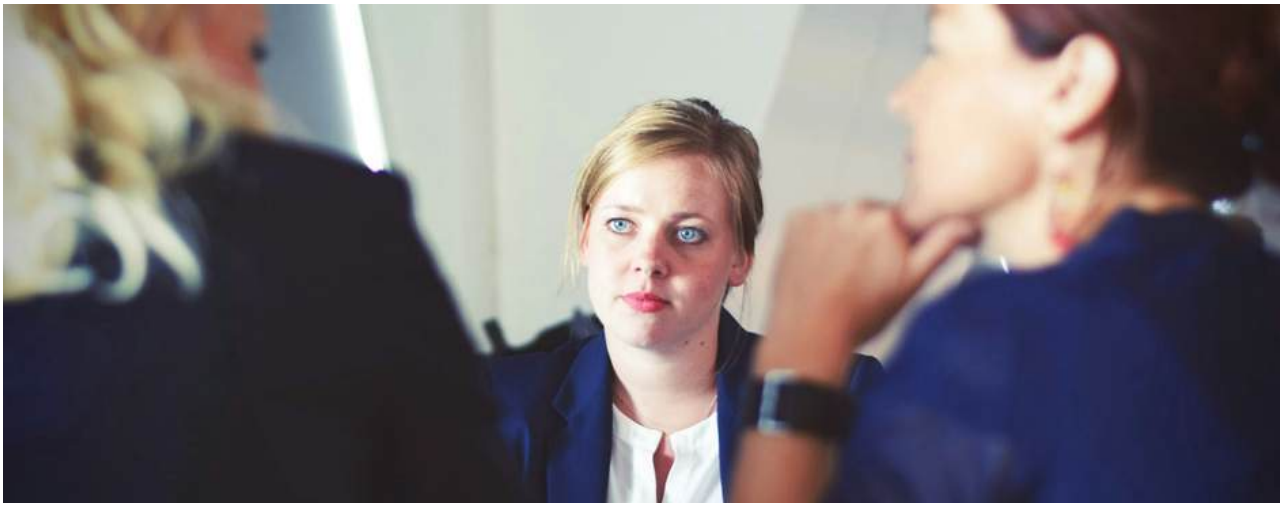


*“We must have the right conversations and make sure people living with cancer are aware of the support available to them - both from the Government, for example, potentially through benefits such as Personal Independence Payment, and from their workplaces.”*

**Sir Stephen Timms, Minister for Social Security and Disabilities and MP for East Ham attended the launch of the report**

*“Although the research identified pockets of good practice, it also highlighted clear gaps in management capability and employee support. Well-managed work can have therapeutic benefits for employees affected by cancer, and it is crucial that organisations implement best practice to ensure employees can return to work environments in which they are able to thrive.”*

**Dr Zofia Bajorek, Senior Research Fellow at IES.**



## Research and Best Practice Webinar, 6 March 2025, 12 till 1pm

Would your organisation benefit from knowing the challenges and opportunities facing other companies addressing cancer in the workforce?

We have just the session for you. We are running a concise one hour webinar in early March to run through the lessons that fall out of our ground breaking research with the Institute for Employment Studies.

Plus we'll give you the questions to ask internally to ensure you're ahead of the curve and are ready for cancer when it hits.

- Veronica Foote, our Head of Policy and Consulting, will clarify what policies should consider and contain.
- Maggie Newton, our Head of Training, will explain how and why the managers of people affected by cancer should be trained.
- Louise Barrett, our Head of Coaching, will summarise why individuals need career support to help them navigate the workplace with cancer or after treatment.

Please sign up here: [Webinars](#)



### Advanced Breast Cancer

Veronica Foote, our Head of Policy and Consulting has recently been quoted in policy documents created by the Health Policy Partnership which aim to address inequalities in care for Metastatic, or Advanced Breast Cancer care. (MBC) Among women, breast cancer is the leading cause cancer deaths worldwide and 90% are due to MBC, but access to treatment is not equitable.

[The Health Policy Partnership](#)



### Under 50's Cancer Rises

Cancer has increased by 22% in the last three decades for the 25 to 49 year old age group.

Read more analysis of why this is happening in this [Daily Telegraph article](#) and consider how it could affect your workforce in the future. [Read here](#)

## Working With Cancer in The News



### Daily Telegraph

Read how Tracy Riddell, Senior Programme Manager at the Centre for Aging Better found that career coaching with Working With Cancer helped her to work throughout her cancer treatment

[Work gave me purpose throughout my cancer treatment](#)



### Employee Benefits

Employee Benefits magazine honed in on our statistic that 96% of organisations do not have cancer specific policies and only 18% collected data on employees with a cancer diagnosis.

Read More: 96% of organisations do not have cancer specific policies | Article | Employee Benefits



### HR News

HR News reported on our research flagging that companies need to do more to support employees affected by cancer.

Read more : UK Workplaces Falling Short in Supporting Employees Affected by Cancer - HR News



### Something Big

Listen to the thoughts of Lindsay Bridges, Global Head of HR at DHL Supply Chain, on her personal experience with cancer in the workplace together with Anna Dunn, WWC Cancer Coach and Sally Pritchett, CEO of Something Big.

[How can we support employees living with cancer? - Something Big](#)

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 to learn about returning to work:

- 11 March

Or if you're an employer, sign up to our webinars on the challenges of managing work and cancer:

- 5 December or 13 March

Find out more here: [Webinars](#)

## WWC Signs Disability Charter

Working With Cancer has joined more than 200 signatories of the [“Disability Employment Charter”](#)

The Charter draws attention to the fact that disabled people, including anyone who has had cancer, have not enjoyed the same employment opportunities as the wider working population. It calls on government to address nine key areas including:

- Employment and pay gap reporting
- Supporting disabled people into employment
- Reform of Access to Work - the government funding which can support people with cancer get coaching to return to work
- Reform of Disability Confident
- Leverage government procurement
- Workplace adjustments
- Advice and Support
- National Progress on disability employment



## NHS Foundation Trust Case Study



The Institute for Employment Studies has published detailed case studies to support the research carried out for the Bevan Report into Improving Employment Support for Those Working With Cancer.

The case studies bring to life real world examples of managing and experiencing working with cancer. For one manager and their colleague who worked in a busy NHS Trust what worked well was:

- The importance of the line management relationship, their open and transparent communication, and the support that was provided.
- Being able to keep-in-touch with management and peers, as well as having the flexibility to take time out for appointments, and to recuperate following certain treatments.

Challenges included:

- Managing the individual to ensure they get the utmost support required, as well as delivering to organisational goals which can be difficult, especially when working in a pressurised environment such as the NHS

Read more about this manager and colleague's experiences from page 18 in our [Case Studies](#)

**“THERE IS AN OVER-RIDING MESSAGE HERE TO LISTEN TO THE PERSON...”**

**“YOU DO NEED TO REMEMBER THAT ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE DO BECOME ‘CANCER FREE’ THEY WILL LIVE WITH HAVING HAD CANCER FOREVER.”**

**“THAT BECOMES PART OF THEIR JOURNEY AND SOMETHING THAT SOMEONE WILL NEVER GET OVER.”**

**“WE AS EMPLOYERS NEED TO REMEMBER THAT CANCER IS A JOURNEY.”**

**SOURCE: LINE MANAGER**



## Last word: Why and how businesses can do more

Our research shocked but didn't surprise us.

We estimate that more than a million people of working age are now living with cancer. And employers shouldn't forget staff who are also carers, trying to combine work and the pressures of looking after loved ones going through cancer.

This is a massive and increasing pressure on people in the workforce managing lives with cancer. And yet, research shows that businesses aren't prepared. They don't have specific policies or collect data on the number of their colleagues affected.

Our research shows businesses recognise they are relying on untrained managers who don't have the time or skills to be ready for the role they need to undertake in helping a member of staff to work with cancer.

What we found most shocking is that 25% of respondents said they didn't understand the disability legislation, or the Access to Work Scheme.

It's clear we can do more. Our conclusions include:

- Develop specific policies
- Gather data
- Review benefits for long term health conditions
- Clearly communicate employee benefits
- Clarify who has ownership on communicating benefits to affected staff
- Consider additional benefits and services
- Be aware of the business case for supporting employees with cancer
- Become familiar with the Access to Work Scheme that can provide financial assistance
- Develop line manager capability
- Consider additional wellbeing support for managers who may be personally affected by the subject
- Provide career coaching for staff affected by cancer including a tailored return to work plan
- Develop HR team capability
- Keep abreast of disability legislation. All people with cancer are legally disabled.

Join us on 6 March at our Best Practice webinar to find out more.

*Thank you for reading!*

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