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**How to support a member of staff with cancer**

The impact of a cancer diagnosis is significant. A manager can play a vital role in supporting a member of staff living with and being treated for cancer. It is important to recognise that every person will have a different experience and their diagnosis and treatment will affect them in different ways, both physically and emotionally. Some people are able, and want, to work during treatment. Others will need to take long term absence from work.

Managers should consider:

* Signposting additional help and support such as the University counselling service and Occupational Health.
* Discussing with the member of staff if, and how, they want to share their diagnosis with other such as immediate colleagues. Respect the individual’s right to privacy.
* If the member of staff is away from the workplace, discuss how they would like to maintain contact – try and find a balance between helping them stay connected and valued without them feeling pressured to return. Agree the best method for updates and how often they would like to receive them.
* Familiarising themselves with the relevant policies and information on sick pay and time off. HR can help with this.
* Making adjustments. This could be changes to the workplace or working arrangements to allow the individual to work during treatment or return to work when treatment has ended. Talk to the individual about what they feel they need. Occupational Health can help too.
* At the right time, put together a return to work plan with the member of staff. Returning from work after a long period or a long illness can be daunting. Consider a phased return, support, gradual handover of work and flexibility in the early weeks and months. Practically, the member off staff will need bringing up to date and may need some time to refresh their skills. Ensure you meet with the individual regularly and make them aware that you are available to discuss any issues or concerns.

Remember that it is fine to ask questions. Macmillan Cancer Support also provide a range of information and toolkits in relation to cancer at work that will be useful reading.

There is a staff support group for people who are impacted by cancer. More information is available [here](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/staff-network/peer-support-group-for-people-impacted-by-cancer/).