



# WORK CANCER: VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

WORKING TOGETHER TO BEAT OCCUPATIONAL CANCER

## Mark's story video transcript

My name is Mark Carter. When I was 17 I joined the Merchant Navy and I spent a lot of time, actually, in the tropics, working out on deck in the hot sunshine. And back then we weren't really aware of the dangers of the sun, so we used to take our tops off and then cover up when we got sore. Our employers never told us anything about sun dangers; it was basically left up to your own decision. I was in the Merchant Navy for about eight years and then I went and did various other jobs after that. But at the age of 42, my wife noticed a mole on my torso, on my chest, that had turned a funny shape. It was, like, sort of cauliflower and uneven round the edges, and she prompted me to go to the doctors and get it looked at. I went to the doctors and he decided to remove it and, I thought, I was a little bit anxious at the time, thinking it might be cancer. Anyway, a week later he rang me up and told me that it was actually malignant melanoma and, of course, I was terribly shocked. I

was in tears; my wife was in tears; we didn't know what to do, where to turn. They took a large area of skin out around the mole, which is, basically, what they do if you get diagnosed with melanoma, in the hope that it won't spread anywhere else. And then you have lots of regular check-ups for at least 10 years, which get less and less as time goes by. Thirteen and a half years after the initial diagnosis, unfortunately, it came back again under the armpit – very painful lump. Woke up one morning, under the arm, I thought I better get down the doctors. The alarm bells were ringing in my head again because I knew that I'd had melanoma all those years ago, and that the problem with melanoma is it can come back at any time. And it turned out this was the case – it had come back. So, now I'm basically a stage 4 melanoma patient, which is a terminal prognosis, but I'm responding well to drugs and I try and stay upbeat about it, but it's very emotional for my wife

and I, obviously, at this time. And what I would say to anybody that works outside is: don't do what I did. Nowadays, there's much more information out there. And I would say this to both employers and employees: cover up in the sun, use high factor sun cream. Melanoma rates have increased four-fold in the last 30 years, so slap on the sun cream, wear a hat, plenty of protective clothing. And just make yourself sun aware if you're working outside, because you're getting sun exposure each day during the summer and, of course, it's also, the effect of UV is cumulative over time. If you just get burnt once and you think, well, it's gone away, I'm healed, it's not actually like that – it can cause damage at cellular level and turn into cancer later on. So, please, please be sun aware and don't do what I did and be ignorant of the facts, because there's no need to today in this day and age.

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