

7 ways that we've identified to help make the return easier for employees and employers



Work is good for health and keeping people in work is good for business – this includes those living with cancer. There's plenty of guidance on how to help people who are ill stay in work or return to work, including IOSH's own guide 'A healthy return'. While the processes and good practice approaches required for successful rehabilitation would appear to be consistent for all types of ill health, when it comes to specific health and safety issues, there's little direct evidence to support this assumption when it comes to cancer.

- 1** **Tailor your approach to the individual** – this could include introducing a phased return to work or implementing flexible working. Make sure that you have developed a written plan for the return.
- 2** **Keep in constant communication throughout** – meet formally and informally, keep key people involved throughout, including managers, HR, occupational health and OSH practitioners.
- 3** **Introduce a return-to-work policy, if you don't already have one** – make sure it covers all illnesses including cancer and be sure to involve OSH practitioners in the development of the policy.
- 4** **Risk assess work tasks** – think about this while employees are going through treatment as well as when they return to work. All assessments should take into consideration individual needs and risks and be reviewed regularly.
- 5** **Try to reduce further risks** – take all elements into consideration including the commute, meetings with clients and work tasks. Try to reduce or eliminate the possibility of risk, particularly around fatigue and infection
- 6** **Keep key people up-to-date** – share information with HR, line managers and OSH practitioners and consider training if necessary.
- 7** **Identify barriers to returning** – would the role stop someone coming back? What symptoms need to be considered? Think about physical, as well as psychological, barriers.