

### Hello everyone

Hello everyone. Welcome to our Summer 2019 edition of the Working With Cancer® newsletter.



In this edition, we are delighted to include:

- A blog by Sara Liyanage, the third in a series she has written for us about her experience of returning to work after cancer. Sara is also the founder of [www.tickingoffbreastcancer.com](http://www.tickingoffbreastcancer.com), a website dedicated to helping people through their breast cancer treatment.
- A piece about the training and coaching we are doing for the young service users of the Teenage Cancer Trust.
- A profile of WWC associate Sarah Dawson and how she came to join WWC.
- A link to an article written by MEPs Elena Gentile, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, and Lieve Wierinck, about the project we have been working on to ensure breast cancer care and prevention including return to work provision remain a significant policy priority in the EU.
- More about our next highly acclaimed Open Workshop for employers which we will be running in London on 8 October 2019.

*“Line managers play a critical role in supporting people affected by cancer in their return to work.*

*They can have the greatest impact on whether someone makes a successful return to work or not“*

*- Working With Cancer® -*

### WWC partners with Teenage Cancer Trust to help young people manage work after cancer



Our Associate Sarah Dawson is coaching and training young cancer survivors to help them 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.

To read the full article click [here](#).

### Returning to work and making changes:

by Sara Liyanage



I thought it seemed rather fitting to start writing this third and final article in my series of 'returning to work after cancer treatment' whilst on the train to work. Every Wednesday I leave the house, walk ten minutes to the station and take a train into London. It's very different taking the train once a week compared to the four times a week that I did before I had cancer. I used to work Mondays to Thursdays. I would leave the office early on three of those days so I could collect the children from their after-school club. My parents helped me out on Wednesdays so I could stay later in the office at least once a week. And I had Fridays off when I zoomed around catching up on everything that needed to be done. It was hectic. I may have been working part-time hours but I was constantly trying to prove my productivity by picking up my emails after work and on my day off. All whilst trying to be the best full-time mother I could be and running our family home. It was really busy and absolutely exhausting.

Then along came cancer..... Read the full article [here](#).

### WWC Open Workshop



#### Would you know what to do/say?

- An employee comes to you and says it's depressing and upsetting for the team to work alongside someone with cancer and asks if the employee could be moved to another team.
- A manager states that an employee in his team with terminal cancer has resigned because he can't cope with his job. Should he just accept his resignation?
- A colleague who is a carer is distressed because her job does not allow her the flexibility to stay with her child in hospital while the child is having cancer treatment. What options are open to her?

Want to know how to deal with issues like these?

Why not come along to our **Open Workshop** on

**Tuesday 8th October 2019 from 10am - 1pm** at:

Lockton Companies LLP  
The St. Botolph Building  
138 Houndsditch  
London, EC3A 7AG.

You can [register here](#).



## My son Alexander

by Sarah Dawson

My son Alexander's diagnosis of Osteosarcoma, a Primary Bone Cancer, in December 2005 was life changing for him and for all our family. His treatment protocol, delivered in the Teenage Cancer Trust unit in Leeds, lasted 41 weeks. It included limb salvage surgery where his left femur and knee joint were replaced with a titanium prosthesis. In addition to coping with the appalling side effects from a cocktail of chemotherapy drugs and losing his hair at the age of 14, Al had to face the future without the contact sports and athletics he so enjoyed.



As his mum this was very hard to watch. All his hopes and dreams of having a successful career, becoming a top flight athlete or a half decent rugby player were snuffed out in one diagnosis. He was a bright and intelligent boy who wanted to focus on what he could do. Now what! Our long days and nights in hospital gave us the opportunity to focus on developing new goals for him.

Through online research, telephone calls and using a network of contacts he found he could still be involved with sport but in a different way. He changed his 'A' level subject choice to include Design and Technology and Physical Education with a new aim to go to University and study Sport Product design, specifically Sports Shoes. This new focus kept him motivated to work hard and deliver his best until his untimely death.

When I was introduced to Barbara and Working With Cancer® in 2018 I found an organisation whose aim is to support people from all walks of life who are working with and in spite of a cancer diagnosis. The partnership between Working with Cancer and Teenage Cancer Trust has given me the opportunity to present current and relevant information relating to discrimination, employment legislation and talking about their cancer diagnosis in a work setting, to delegates on the Way Forward programme at regional locations.

I am also privileged to count five young people nominated by Teenage Cancer Trust as coachees. Coaching has helped them to identify and acknowledge the skills and strengths they possess and to discover how they could apply them in new, or changed opportunities for study, work and careers. They have developed CVs and learned techniques for successful applications and interviews. All are grateful to Working with Cancer® for the support to help them to begin to have the confidence to build new dreams and give purpose to their lives.

## Making breast cancer care and prevention a top priority for the EU

**How MEPs Elena Gentile, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, and Lieve Wierinck, have been working to ensure breast cancer care and prevention, including return to work programmes remain a significant policy priority in the EU.**



The three MEPs write: 'Ahead of the European Parliament elections in May 2019, we published our [EU Elections Manifesto](#) which calls for the following:

1. Ensuring breast cancer is screened, diagnosed and treated at an early stage and that all breast cancer patients have access to treatment in a breast unit by a specialised multidisciplinary team;
2. Ensuring return to work programmes for breast cancer patients and survivors; and
3. Maintaining a favourable environment for the collection of breast cancer data and the development of innovative health technologies.'

To read the full article click [here](#)

## We've been busy!

We've been busy since our last newsletter as you will see! Here are some of our many activities and a big thank you to the organisations listed below.

- We have supported a webinar for the [Employers Network for Disability and Inclusion](#) (ENEI) and run a session on managing work and cancer for WharfAbility a network of firms in Canary Wharf and the City of London founded in 2012 by individuals involved with advancing disability confidence.
- We have run workshops or made presentations or manned stalls for a Head and Neck Cancer support group based in London, the Milton Keynes Cancer Patient Partnership, for health professionals at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, for Bowel Cancer patients at The Christie, for the Teenage Cancer Trust Way Forward Programme (see our earlier article) and for the service users of [CLIC Sargent](#) - my first, and probably, not the last, Facebook chat!

*"Like many I was so eager to 'get back to normal' and a large part of that was to get back to work"*

*- Cancer Survivor -*

## And finally...

Working With Cancer® is always happy to arrange speakers for conferences and events – if you would like to book us for an event, please [contact us](#). Tel: **07910 835585**