

FOR **MANAGERS** WITH EMPLOYEES
WHO HAVE, OR HAVE HAD, CANCER



SUPPORTING YOUR EMPLOYEE'S RETURN TO WORK

Navigating a return to work during or after a cancer journey can be challenging. This leaflet provides guidance on how to support your employee both during their sick leave and as they transition back to work.

It might be challenging for your employee to return to work

Receiving a serious illness diagnosis, such as cancer, can significantly disrupt everyday life and overall well-being. The experience often leads to a loss of control and impacts individuals on physical, emotional, and existential levels.

Cancer and its treatment can lead to both immediate and long-term side effects. Even after been declared cancer-free, many individuals may still face challenges that impact their ability to work, some of which may not be immediately visible.

Side effects: These are typically temporary and may resolve over a period of months or years.

Late effects: These can either emerge during treatment and become chronic or develop months or years after treatment has ended. Consequently, some individuals may face new late effects and challenges when they return to work.

Common side and late effects:

- Memory and concentration issues
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulty maintaining focus
- Sensory disturbances
- Increased sensitivity
- Anxiety and depression
- Pain

Supporting Your employee's return to work

When your employee is ready to return, it's crucial to collaborate on a detailed plan that addresses the following:

Working hours

Agree on the number of hours and days, such as three hours a day, three days a week, and determine the specific times for these hours.

Tasks

Clarify which tasks your employee will handle. Ensure that tasks are well-defined and manageable, starting with those your employee is confident in completing.

Breaks

Plan for regular breaks throughout the workday as well as between working days to support your employee's well-being.

Additional considerations

Discuss any necessary adjustments in the workplace, such as modifications for shielding or assistance with specific tasks.

Follow-up

Schedule regular follow-up meetings, ideally every three weeks, to evaluate and adjust the "back to work" plan as needed. Remember to continue follow-ups even after the employee has fully resumed work, such as at the one-year mark.

Key terms and concepts



Notification of sickness absence

You must report any sickness absence to the municipality via Nem Refusion within the designated deadline.

Sickness benefits/reimbursement

You can apply to the municipality for sickness benefits, which partially cover salary costs for your employee on sick leave. Refunds may be granted for up to 22 weeks, with the possibility of extension.

Sick leave interview

You are required to schedule a sick leave interview with your employee no later than four weeks after the first day of illness. This can be conducted in person, by telephone, or via email. The interview may be postponed, for instance, if the employee is hospitalized. The purpose of the interview is to plan the employee's return to work.

Statement of opportunity

If you need to determine when your employee can return to work and which tasks can be performed despite their illness, you can request a declaration of opportunity from the employee's doctor in collaboration with the employee.

Follow-up interview with the job centre

Until your employee is fully recovered, they are required to attend follow-up interviews with the job centre. These interviews can occur by telephone if the employee has partially returned to work.

Disability compensatory schemes

If the illness or treatment has resulted in physical or mental impairment, the job centre can provide assistance, such as workplace accommodations or personal support.

§ 56 Agreement

If there is an expectation of increased sickness absence related to cancer after the employee has fully returned to work, you and your employee can apply for a § 56 agreement. In this case, you will receive sickness benefits from the first day of sick leave.

Social chapters

Companies are obligated, through collective agreements, to support employees' workplace connections during periods of sick leave. Any agreements between the employer and employee must be documented in writing.

Flexible job (Danish: Flexjob)

If the job centre determines that your employee has a significantly reduced ability to work permanently, they can explore the possibility of a flex job.

JOBCENTRET

- The Job Centre assists individuals on sick leave both during their absence and as they transition back to work.
- It has the authority to make decisions regarding the extension of sickness benefits/reimbursements, flex jobs, and disability pensions.
- The Job Centre also provides guidance to workplaces during the employee's sick leave and upon their return to work.

5 Helpful tips

1

Be patient with your employee

Recognize that it may take four months or longer for your employee to fully return to work.

2

Establish communication agreements

Agree on the preferred method of contact (phone, in-person meetings, email) and decide how often you will communicate about relevant matters, both during sick leave and as the employee transitions back to work.

3

Clarify communication regarding announcements

Discuss with the employee what information will be shared in the workplace and with collaborators and determine who will be responsible for these communications.

4

Alleviate concerns about job security

Many individuals on sick leave worry about potential termination. Address these concerns openly with your employee to provide reassurance.

5

Avoid comparisons with others

Remember that there are over 100 different types of cancer, and experiences with the disease, treatment, and reactions can vary significantly from person to person. Be mindful not to make comparisons.

SUPPORT COLLEAGUES

- Encourage conversations within the team about how they are impacted by their colleague's cancer diagnosis or recovery. Address any reactions or feelings that arise.
- Review and clarify the tasks assigned to the employee on sick leave. Clearly outline how these tasks should be prioritized and managed. Continuously communicate with the team about how the colleague's absence affects their workload.

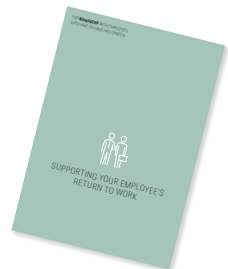
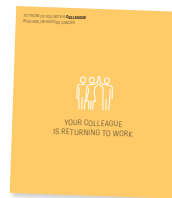
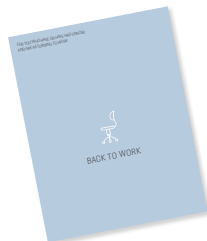
Need more information or support?

- HR Department
- Job Centre
- Danish Employers' Confederation
- Danish agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR)
- Centre for Active Employment Efforts (Cabi)
- Association of Late Effects (Senfølgerforeningen)

REHPA

Videncenter for
Rehabilitering og Palliation

CENTER FOR
KRÆFT & SUNDHED
KØBENHAVN



This leaflet is part of a series that includes two additional leaflets: one for your employee who has, or has had, cancer and one for the group of colleagues to the person affected by cancer. You can download the leaflets from www.kraeft.kk.dk/viden-og-vaerktoejer/materialer/pjecer-om-stoette-til-at-vende-tilbage-paa-arbejde