

# Shine Cancer Support Our Support & Activities

Cancer support when you're in your 20s, 30s or 40s



**find out more**  
[shinecancersupport.org](https://shinecancersupport.org)

Registered Charity in England & Wales No 1146902





# hello

We're so sorry that you need us, but we are very glad that you have found us, and we're happy to have you as part of our growing community.

So, what is Shine? We're a charity that supports adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s with a cancer diagnosis, through a range of in-person and online activities. There is never a good time to have cancer, but we know that you face different issues to older or younger people. Work, relationships, mental health, fertility, travelling – we're here to guide you through this and more.

Our programmes, events and support are designed so that there is something to suit everyone – and we also host activities for your family and friends. Whether you're recently diagnosed or have been living with cancer for many years, we hope you'll find something that works for you.

We have developed this booklet to give you an overview of our services. Like many charities, we had to change the way we worked when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. We developed a range of online programmes and offered virtual meet-ups. These are still running but we're happy to be reintroducing in-person support where we can.

Either way, we're here for you, whether it's through a screen or face-to-face.

You can also find lots of information on our website over at [shinecancersupport.org](https://shinecancersupport.org).

Please get in touch if you can't find what you're looking for. If we don't have the answer, we can signpost you to the people who do.

We hope to see you soon.

Shine Cancer Support

# about Shine and our work

Shine is the only UK charity specifically for those in their 20s, 30s and 40s who have experienced a cancer diagnosis. We have been supporting young adults with cancer since 2008, starting as a small support group in Dorset, before launching in London in 2010. We now support thousands of adults across the UK.

We are a small but mighty team who have all had a cancer diagnosis and we work with dozens of regular volunteers across the UK. We work in partnership with other cancer support organisations and experts to design activities that meet the needs of young adults with cancer, while also reducing isolation and encouraging peer support.

We have been there and we get it. We know that people in this age group face different issues to older or younger people. We aim to address this through our patient-led programmes, events and get-togethers, and support.

We want every adult in their 20s, 30s and 40s diagnosed with cancer to know they're not alone, and to have the support, knowledge, and confidence to navigate whatever cancer throws their way.

We provide a range of activities including lunches and drinks evenings, beach walks, multi-day getaways, workshops, online networking, and mentoring. We have local Shine Networks across the UK and run a number of annual events including Shine Camp, the Great Escape retreats, and Shine Connect, the UK's only conference for young adults with cancer. We also run a number of highly-rated online programmes, as well as workshops on topics such as working after cancer and managing anxiety and depression.

## Connect with us

We aim to bring people together, share experiences, and help you take back control – in a relaxed environment. Whether you want to join a small group to discuss your cancer treatment or you want to get away for a relaxing weekend, we've got lots of options to suit different needs.

The most popular way to connect with us is through our Shine Networks and online groups on Facebook which you can access via [shinecancersupport.org](https://shinecancersupport.org). You may also want to take a look at the Personal Experiences on our website. Many young adults that we support have written about their diagnosis and treatment, as well as how they live with and after cancer. You can view them [here](#).



# how we can support you

## online support

A lot of our support can be accessed online. This includes our **Facebook groups**, **blogs**, and **podcasts**. We also have regular Zoom meet-ups and **a Book Club**.

You can find out more about our services in this booklet and if you see something you would like to take part in, **head to our website** for up-to-date details on whether they are online or in-person. We are running many activities, just get in touch to find out what is happening and when.

If you'd like to get in touch or ask any questions, please email [hi@shinecancersupport.org](mailto:hi@shinecancersupport.org).



## regular events and get-togethers

### Shine Connect Conference

Our national conference, usually held in London, is designed to help you and your 'plus ones' (which may be a partner, friend or family member) meet others and share your experiences, as well as hear from experts from across the cancer field. We have covered a range of topics including menopause, being LGBTQI+ with cancer and making sense of the statistics. Shine Connect has been online since 2020, but we are excited to be back in person for 2023!

You can take a look at some of the previous sessions on our [YouTube channel](#) and find out when our next conference is and [sign up here](#).



### Shine Camp

Our annual weekend **camping trip** in Dorset has been running since 2010 and has grown from 17 campers to over 100 people each year! It's a lot of fun and with no strict agenda, is also very chilled, and you can get as involved as much as you like. Our amazing volunteers organise quizzes, orienteering, walks, yoga, campfire marshmallows and games for you and your family, or you can simply relax! This is aimed at you and your plus ones and is designed to allow you to meet other people and enjoy the outdoors. It was fantastic to be back in person at our 2022 camp and we are looking forward to getting our camp on in 2023.



# how we can support you

## groups and networks

### Facebook groups

Why not connect with others, ask questions and receive emotional support through one of our **closed Facebook groups**? We have a main group for those who are 20-49 with a cancer diagnosis, which now has over 3000+ members from across the UK. Membership is open to anyone in our age group, with any type of cancer, at any stage.

We also have:

- **Shine Lifers** for those living with an incurable diagnosis. Like our other groups this is moderated by members and it is a supportive environment for people facing advanced diagnoses to discuss their issues.
- **Shine Plus Ones** for partners, friends and family of younger adults with cancer. We also run programmes and workshops for Plus Ones.
- **Menopause after Cancer** for those with early menopause as a result of cancer treatment. Rather than offering medical advice, it's a place to give each other support, top tips, and comfort in the form of 'oh my gosh you stick your head in the freezer too!' type moments.
- **Dating after Cancer** for those in the world of dating. Great for trading tips, chat about your dating profile and hear about each other's worst (and best!) dating stories.



### Book Club

We have a monthly online book club which is open to all. Each month, the group chooses a book and then gets together to discuss it, though we keep it informal! If you'd like to join us, email [bookclub@shinecancersupport.org](mailto:bookclub@shinecancersupport.org)

### Shine Networks

We have **16 networks** across the UK who meet up regularly for chats, coffee, and evenings out. With volunteer-led groups across the UK, from Devon, to Manchester, and Edinburgh, it's a great place to meet people outside of a clinical setting.

Our annual impact survey found that 97% of people who attend felt more emotionally supported and 75% felt much less isolated. Shine members also report feeling more confident and hopeful.

Since the pandemic, many networks have run Zoom meet ups but are now also starting to host in person meet ups, so get in touch to find out about the next meeting by contacting your **nearest network**. If we don't have a network near you, we're always open to starting new ones!

# programmes and workshops

## Break Out Programme

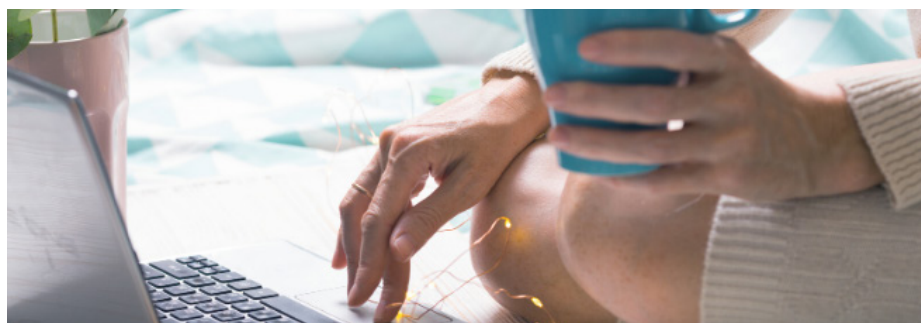
Whether you've recently finished treatment, are living with the after effects of a diagnosis and treatment or are even mid-way through treatment, the Break Out programme can be a useful way to process your experience. Join a small group who meet up online for two hours each week for six weeks, to take part in facilitated sessions on the topics that matter to you. This programme is all about giving you the space to chat and discuss different topics such as purpose after diagnosis, fertility, and relationships. And we promise, it isn't gloomy!

Find out more [here](#)

## Shine Circles

If you're living with an advanced, incurable or chronic diagnosis and want to connect with people at the same stage of their cancer experience as you, this is the group for you. We meet every week, for two hours, to discuss different topics, such as managing uncertainty, finding balance and telling your story. The Shine Circles programme is entirely online and takes place across six weeks. And many of our groups stay in touch after.

Find out more [here](#)



## Shine Plus One Circle

Our Plus One Circle is for the partners of younger adults with cancer. As with our other online programmes, we meet every week, for two hours, to discuss different topics, but with a focus on helping you to cope. The Plus Ones Circle has received great feedback, with many of the group members staying in touch and even meeting in person.

Find out more [here](#)

## Workshops

We run a variety of [workshops](#) looking at issues such as working after cancer and managing anxiety and loss. Our workshops are generally a mix of expert advice, learning from others, and sharing our experiences. We also run dedicated workshops for our Plus Ones to meet others who are supporting a young adult with cancer. They're always very informal so you don't have to worry about being put on the spot or saying something silly.



# how we can support you

## online resources

### Podcast

If you're looking for a new podcast to listen to while in hospital or on a walk, our 'Not Your Grandma's Cancer Show' podcast could be for you. Hosted by Tatum de Roeck – a Shine member diagnosed with breast cancer in her 30s – our podcast covers topics such as coping with cancer in lockdown, cancer in the LGBTQI+ community, coping with anxiety, and living with incurable cancer. It is available [via our website](#) as well as [on Spotify](#).



### Blog

Our online [blog](#) is all about reflecting the experiences of young adults with cancer, and covering topics that don't get talked about elsewhere. It is one of our most popular pages on the website and blogs range from light-hearted and funny, to top tips, and deeper topics. Dating and sex, clinical trials, PTSD, or tips to help with chemotherapy, it's all tagged ready for you to delve into. And if you have any of your own perspectives you would like to share, we are always open to new submissions.



### Shine on YouTube

If videos are more your thing, we have loads of videos on topics that matter to our community. You can find informative videos from our recent conferences, as well as expert Q&A sessions on everything from anxiety and fertility to sex and working after cancer. You can watch these on our [YouTube channel here](#).

### Booklets and Guides

We have produced a number of useful booklets which are available free [on our website](#).

You can find [our guide to Travel Insurance](#) after cancer here. We know that travel insurance is a hot topic for our community and we worked with experts from the industry to get you accurate information on managing those premiums.

Our guide for [young adults who are newly diagnosed with cancer](#) was co-designed with young adults and includes tips and questions to ask. Similarly, [our guide to living with advanced cancer](#) covers

lots of the issues that we know our community have. And if you have a partner, point them in the direction of [our guide for Plus Ones](#) which will help them understand how they can support you while also looking after themselves.



### Activity videos

We have developed a range of yoga, pilates, circuits, and relaxation and breathwork videos to help promote relaxation, and provide some techniques to deal with stress and anxiety. You can watch these [here](#).

# living with cancer



## Working during and after cancer

Going to work during and after a cancer diagnosis can be tough. Some days you may feel it helps to have a sense of routine, on other days you might find it all pointless and want to go home and never return. It could also change depending on your mood or how your treatment is affecting you – pain, numbness, nausea, can all make it more difficult to concentrate.

According to Cancer Research UK, over 100,000 people of working age are diagnosed with cancer each year and 30,000 of these are people aged 25 to 49. It can be useful to keep your manager or HR updated on your treatment and prognosis. This should help them to support you through treatment and to return to work after. Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to support you, including lighter duties, flexible hours, and time off to attend appointments.

You can find more information [here](#) or join one of our [workshops](#) on working after a cancer diagnosis.

## Fertility

Some treatments, such as chemotherapy and hormone therapy, can reduce your fertility. For women, treatment could cause damage to the eggs, womb, cervix or hormone production, or start an early menopause, and for men, it could be that your sperm production slows down or stops, or you could have problems maintaining an erection.

We know from talking to our community that even if your doctor talks about fertility when you're diagnosed, it is often not discussed again. If having a child in the future is important to you, you should ideally speak to your consultant about fertility preservation before your treatment starts. If you have already started treatment, speak to your consultant about the changes in your body and the options available to you.

You can find more about fertility [here](#) and we have [videos](#), [blogs](#) and a [podcast](#) on the topic.



# living with cancer

## Early menopause

Menopause usually occurs in women in their 40s and 50s when the ovaries stop producing hormones and periods eventually stop, meaning you can no longer become pregnant. Some cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, hormone therapy and radiotherapy to the pelvis, can cause an early or temporary menopause. As a result, you may experience hot flushes, difficulty sleeping, aches and pains, anxiety, vaginal dryness and poor concentration.



We get that this can be overwhelming, especially alongside having to deal with cancer treatment and its side effects. Talk to your doctor to find out how likely this is to happen to you and how you can prepare. If you experience early menopause, your doctor may be able to prescribe drugs and treatments, such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to ease symptoms, antidepressants to reduce hot flushes or vaginal oestrogen to help with dryness. Some people also find complementary therapies help, such as acupuncture, hypnosis and breathing techniques.

We have more information on our website and you can also join our Shine Cancer Support Facebook Group – [Menopause After Cancer](#)

## Money

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills, or you may have financial commitments such as rent, a mortgage and utility bills that can be a struggle if you have to stop working. It is worth contacting your service providers to see if they can reduce costs or offer delayed payments in light of a diagnosis.

If you are concerned about the financial implications of your cancer treatment, you can speak to a benefits advisor, through organisations including Maggie's or Macmillan. You should also check out the Willow Foundation, Osborne Trust and Something to Look Forward to help with special treats.



## Caring for children

Being a parent can be hard work at the best of times, but going through cancer treatment can make it more physically and emotionally exhausting. Take a look at your daily routine and see where you could ask for help or drop tasks. It is important to accept that you do not have the time or energy for everything.

- Speak to your consultant about things such as timing of appointments to make it as smooth as possible with childcare
- See what support your employer or tutor can provide in terms of flexible working
- Talk to your partner about them taking on more or different responsibilities, if possible
- Ask family and friends for help with school drop-offs, preparing meals, or cleaning
- Contact community groups, such as faith groups or charities, as there may be people who can visit your home to help with childcare, or assist with before or after school care
- Speak to the school your children attend about what's happening. They may have in-school support available, or be able to provide assistance either before or after school activities

## Travel

Feel like you need a holiday? People with cancer are allowed to have fun too! As long as your consultant is happy and you feel up to it, you can get on the next flight to wherever you fancy. One thing to bear in mind is that your trip could, unfortunately, get more expensive once you start looking for travel insurance.

However, a number of insurers now use medical screening programmes which more accurately assess the risk, meaning that premiums are lower. One system is the Protectif Medical Risk Rating, used by a number of different companies, which asks relevant questions on your medical condition to assess your individual risk effectively.

It's important to understand that if you don't get cover for your cancer, it is not just cancer that you are excluding; it's anything that could be attributed to the cancer or the treatment of it.

Find out more about travel insurance [here](#) or download our [guide](#).



# ways to get involved

We are always interested in hearing your experiences so if you fancy writing a blog, speaking on a podcast or sharing your story in another way, please **get in touch**.

Or if you would like to support your local Shine Network with informal meet-ups, speak with your local **Network leader**, or let us know if you want to set up your own!

Shine is a small charity and we don't receive any funding from the Government to provide our services. You can help us to support more young adults with cancer by fundraising or donating.

You, your friends, colleagues or family can fundraise for us through taking part in sports events such as the London Marathon, Great North Run or NightRider or you can run, walk, swim or cycle for the **30k Challenge**. If that's not really your thing, you can **create your own challenge** such as hosting a bake sale, doing a skydive, organising a music event, or making the most of an unusual skill you might have! Download the **Challenge Accepted** app, a free motivation app, to help inspire you with fundraising challenge ideas to start and help you track your progress. And take a look at #SmashItForShine on Twitter and Instagram for some inspiration and to support other fundraisers!

We also accept support through our **JustGiving** page or through **payroll giving** or **gifts in memoriam**.



# keep in touch

Thank you for reading our booklet about all the services and support that we offer.

You can find more information on our website and please connect with the community - it's a great one! They are there for you when you feel ready to join a supportive Facebook group, a workshop, get-together, or simply to check out our blogs. It's a chance to meet with people your age with shared experiences, to ask questions without judgement, and give each other a boost if times get tough. We also have a lot of fun too!

Find out more and keep in touch at [\*\*shinecancersupport.org\*\*](https://shinecancersupport.org)

If you have any questions or would like further information, please drop us a line at:

[\*\*hi@shinecancersupport.org\*\*](mailto:hi@shinecancersupport.org)

For fundraising please email:

[\*\*fundraising@shinecancersupport.org\*\*](mailto:fundraising@shinecancersupport.org)

Connect with us on social media:

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[\*\*Twitter.com/shinecancersupp\*\*](https://Twitter.com/shinecancersupp)

[\*\*Instagram.com/shinecancersupport\*\*](https://Instagram.com/shinecancersupport)



## We'd love to meet you!

To find out more information, check out our website, follow us on social media, or drop us an email.

**hi@shinecancersupport.org**

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