

Elevated cancer risk in the construction industry

An introduction to Cancer Research UK

1 in 2 people in the UK will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lifetime.

Currently only **2 in 4** will survive their diagnosis.

Around **40% of cancer cases can be prevented** by changes in lifestyle.

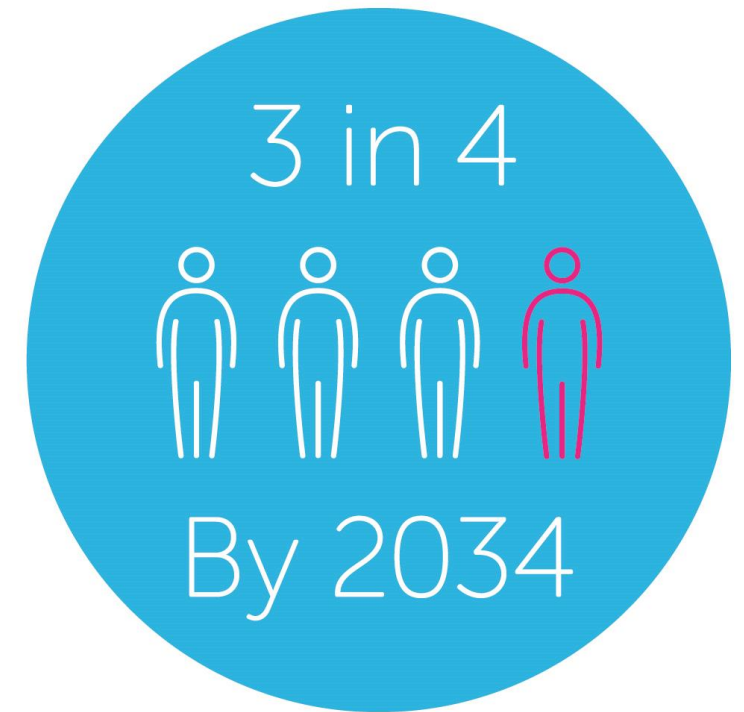
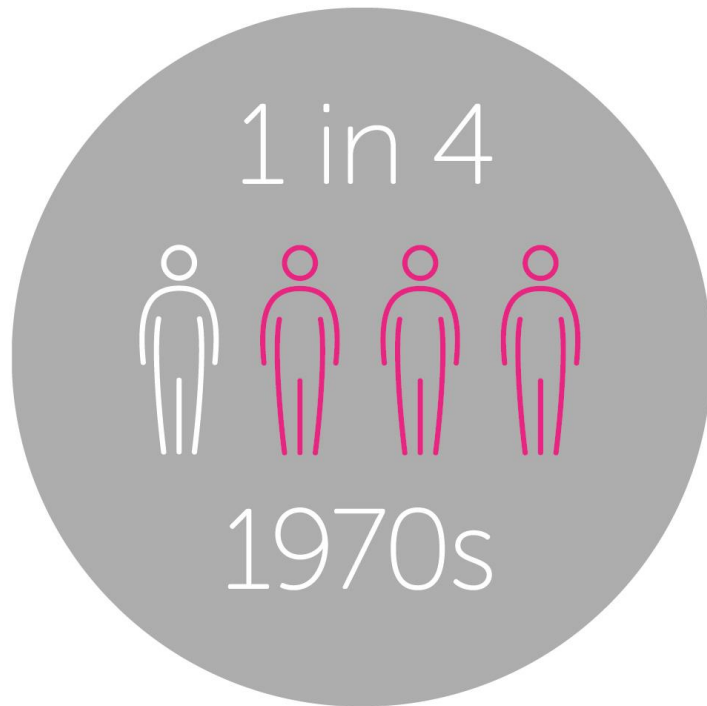
About Cancer Research UK:

- The **largest independent funder** of cancer research in the world
- The only charity to fund research into **200+ types of cancer**
- We bring together the best minds in the world to fund **pioneering research**
- **8 Nobel Prize-winning** scientists
- The UK's **most trusted** charity brand
- We've played a part in developing the **leading forms of treatment for cancer**: surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy
- World-leaders in **translating evidence based research into engaging communications**
- Our research has played a role in developing **8 of the world's top 10** cancer drugs



Our ambition

In the 1970s, just 1 in 4 people in the UK survived cancer. Today, thanks to research, that figure has doubled. Our ambition is to continue to accelerate this progress so that 3 in 4 people survive cancer for 10 years or more by the year 2034.



Heightened risk of cancer in construction

Construction workers are an 'at risk' group for cancer. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Construction workers are at a significantly higher risk of **developing and dying from skin cancer**, due to working outdoors.
- Construction workers are **twice as likely to smoke** every day compared to the average population. Around 2 in 3 long term smokers die from their habit.
- 24% of construction workers **drink above government guidelines** compared to 15.5% of the general population. Alcohol is linked to 7 types of cancer.
- Over 50% of workers in construction are from a **lower socio-economic background** (C2DE). Rates of cancer are 24% higher in men and 13% in women for C2DE groups. In England this difference leads to around 15,000 additional cases of cancer each year.

The costs of ill health

- Every year, the construction sector loses **1.2 million working days due to work-related ill health**, this includes mental, as well as physical health problems - Health in Construction Leadership Group.
- On average UK employees lose the equivalent of **30.4 days of productive time annually due to sick days, or underperformance as a result of ill-health**. In monetary terms, this currently equates to a loss of **£77.5bn a year for the UK economy**.
- Businesses with low employee engagement report **62% more accidents** than those with high engagement.
- It is estimated that **disengaged employees are costing the UK economy £340bn** every year in training and recruitment costs, sick days, as well as through a lack of productivity, creativity and innovation.




The COVID-19 disruption to cancer care

The current COVID-19 pandemic has caused major disruption to cancer care in the UK.

- In the first 10 weeks of lockdown alone, around **2.1 million people have been left waiting** for breast, bowel and cervical screening. For every week that screening has been paused, 7,000 people haven't been referred for further tests and the chance to diagnose 380 cancers has been missed.
- Urgent cancer referrals, called "two-week wait" referrals, have been severely impacted with up to **290,000 people missing out on further testing.** These referrals would normally have resulted in **20,300 cancers being diagnosed.**

These disruptions will have a **major effect on those most at risk of cancer**, including those within the construction industry.

We need to ensure that anyone with symptoms is seeking the medical help they need, to make sure no one's diagnosis is delayed. By working with key companies within the industry we are hoping that we can reach those at most risk and provide additional support during this difficult time.



"Delays to diagnosis and treatment could mean that some cancers will become inoperable. Patients shouldn't need to wait for this to be over before getting the treatment they need."

Professor Charles Swanton
Cancer Research UK's
chief clinician

The impact for employees and employers

A strategic partnership with Cancer Research UK can have impact in three key areas for employees and employers:



There is huge potential for a partnership with companies within the sector to be **transformational** to the health & wellbeing of workers within the construction industry.

A Case Study: Scottish Power

Scottish Power have been a partner of Cancer Research UK since **2012**. They have a multi-faceted partnership which includes health information and awareness, employee engagement and commercial activity.

In the 8 years of the partnership they have raised over £25million for CRUK.

CRUK have worked closely with Scottish Power's Occupational Health Department since the beginning of the partnership. They continually work towards helping the company retain its *Healthy Working Lives* Gold Award and helps to identify issues and improve health, safety and wellbeing throughout the organisation.

Some examples of the health activity that have taken place include:

- **Bespoke communications** that are tailored to reach different parts of the company, from office workers to those on site, with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging employees to make healthy choices.
- **Cancer Awareness workshops** and **Nurse Health Stands** delivered at sites across the UK
- **Unique engagement activity** created for Scottish Power, for example:
 - Free Ice Cream giveaways at worksites as part of a sun safety campaign with outdoor workers. The scoop of ice cream given out was equivalent to the amount of sun screen that should be used by workers to cover up in the sun (this was repeated across multiple sites for 4 years).



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pieces of face-to-face activity delivered since 2018: including health stands, presentations and The Cancer Awareness Roadshow

Over £1m

Raised through employee and supplier fundraising so far.



Together we can beat cancer

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