

Head and Neck Cancer Awareness



Education, engagement and inclusion for employees.

World Head and Neck Cancer Day in July 2026, is a dedicated awareness day aimed at educating people about head and neck cancer, its signs and symptoms, and the importance of contacting a GP with any concerns. There are more than 13,000 new cases of head and neck cancer in the UK every year, and this day helps educate employees about what to look for.



Why promote Head and Neck Cancer Day in your workplace?

- Head and neck cancer is the eighth most common cancer in the UK, resulting in almost 5,000 deaths per year
- Head and neck cancer is three times more common in men than in women
- 46–88% of head and neck cancer cases in the UK are preventable with lifestyle choices
- Offering risk awareness education can make a real difference to employees, as well as to the significant costs associated with cancer

65%

Of surveyed employees agreed that cancer prevention and early detection education is important in the workplace.

55%

Agreed that employers have an actual responsibility to support cancer prevention and early detection education.

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Given the significant number of people of working age who are affected by cancer, and the devastating impact the illness can have on them and their loved ones, it is vital for employers to appropriately support their staff.

Ian Talbot, CEO, Healix Health Services

Five easy ways to promote the campaign



01

Share the employee brochure provided in the Perci Health cancer awareness campaign hub.

02

Display the provided posters in areas of high footfall around the workplace, such as breakout areas, kitchens and bathrooms.

03

Share the ready-to-go social media posts on your chosen channels, offering reliable stats about head and neck cancer.

04

Post a short awareness message on Slack, Teams or the company intranet, explaining the importance of the campaign.

05

Encourage employees to return screening tests if they have been sent one.

How to have sensitive conversations during a cancer awareness campaign

Feeling uncomfortable about having conversations about cancer and screening is a significant barrier to running an engaging cancer awareness campaign. Here's how managers can approach them.

- ✓ **DO** Use inclusive language. For example, at Perci, we use 'Eligible people' when we talk about screening.
- ✓ **DO** Signpost employees to reputable information (like the Perci campaign awareness assets) and sources of advice (like Macmillan, NHS, their GP or Perci cancer nurse specialists).
- ✓ **DO** Plan how to respond if an employee raises concerns, before you actually need to.

- ✗ **DON'T** Ask employees whether they are up to date on screening. Instead, direct employees to the NHS app to check the date of their last results.
- ✗ **DON'T** Offer medical advice yourself or share personal stories about screening experiences or cancer.

Why should employers support head and neck cancer awareness?

At-risk individuals face significant barriers to the knowledge and support that could potentially save their lives.

- **Routine NHS screening is not available**
There isn't a national screening programme for head and neck cancers in the UK
- **Because there are many different types of head and neck cancer, there are many different symptoms**
And many symptoms, like a persistent sore throat or mouth ulcer, can easily be ignored
- **Men are less likely to seek healthcare than women**
Studies show that men have lower levels of health literacy and poorer awareness and recognition of cancer symptoms than women.

Currently, it's an individual's own responsibility to understand head and neck cancer signs and symptoms, investigate their personal risk, and to contact a GP if they're concerned. It's therefore vital that employers engage with campaigns of this kind and provide free, reliable advice, as well as offering time off to attend GP and testing appointments.

Trusted head and neck cancer resource

macmillan.org.uk

It's also a good idea to research screening support local to your workplace.