



# menopause



## **Why it's important to support your staff who suffer with menopause symptoms**

Here in Occupational Health we are passionate about the health and wellbeing of all of our staff. As part of this, we want to raise awareness of menopause and specifically how we can all help our colleagues that are in this natural phase of their life, but who may need support at work due to the impact on their physical, mental and cognitive functioning.

A starting point is to create a culture in which menopause can be talked about openly and without embarrassment.

Menopause is a natural part of a person's life and it isn't always an easy transition for all, but with the right support it can be much better. While every individual does not suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work and in their personal lives.

The changing age of the workforce means that more menopausal people are in work. Research shows that the majority of people are unwilling to discuss menopause related health problems with their line manager, or ask for the support or any adjustments that they may need. We want to change that.

Men need to know about the menopause too, so they can support colleagues, friends and family.





## **talking to your team members**

If a member of your team wants to talk about menopause – or just talk about how they are feeling, as they may not know if they have menopausal symptoms – please make sure you:

- Arrange an appropriate time to meet, allowing enough time for the conversation
- Find a room that will keep your conversation confidential
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly
- Explore the best ways they can be supported (see reasonable adjustments)
- Agree on any actions or adjustments and how to implement them
- Arrange a follow-up meeting if needed

Never assume that because a person is of menopausal age that this will be affecting them at work

If you feel a member of your team needs support then you can have a conversation about what they're experiencing and what could be done in the workplace to help.

## **assessing reasonable adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis. Many will be simple and won't involve any cost, and may vary in the time they are needed.

During your meeting, discuss with your team member what their symptoms are, how it's affecting them at work, what they're doing to manage their symptoms and how you can help.

Try not to make any assumptions in advance, be prepared to listen and open to ideas, with a clear understanding of how this will work for the business as well as for the individual.

Remember that symptoms vary both in their nature and how long they last for.

**here are some ideas of the changes / adjustments that you may want to consider to help your team member:**

Hot Flashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature control for their work area. This could include offering a desk fan</li> <li>• Permanent access to fresh drinking water</li> <li>• Access to a quiet room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush</li> </ul>
Heavy Periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent access to washroom facilities</li> <li>• Make sure sanitary protection is available in toilets</li> </ul>
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have access to fresh drinking water</li> <li>• Consider if there's a quieter space to work</li> <li>• Have a time out to take medication if needed</li> </ul>
Difficulty Sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider our flexible working policy or informal arrangements to arrive later for work</li> <li>• Consider if working from home is an option</li> </ul>
Low Mood, Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with them their most appropriate sources of help, which could include their GP, 'Let's Talk'/Emotional Wellbeing Service, Occupational Health and/or the staff counselling service</li> </ul>
Loss of Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular one-to-one discussions</li> <li>• Have protected time to catch up with work</li> </ul>
Poor Concentration/Brain Fog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust working hours to fit times of the day when concentration is better</li> <li>• Review task allocation and workload</li> <li>• Provide list books, a note board or other memory-assisting equipment</li> <li>• Offer quieter space to work</li> <li>• Reduce interruptions if possible</li> <li>• Have protected time to catch up with work</li> <li>• Support in meetings if brain fog is experienced</li> </ul>

### **review how the adjustments are working and if they're still needed**

After the adjustments have been agreed and put into place, it's important to monitor their effectiveness and agree a time for a follow-up meeting to discuss. It may be necessary to change the adjustments, or they may only be needed in the short term.

Keep notes of all your discussions, including what you've both agreed to do as a result and any necessary follow-ups. Keep these conversations and agreements confidential unless the colleague involved chooses to disclose them to other colleagues



### **more information**

Please talk to or refer your team member to the Occupational Health team if you need any more information or advice.

As a manager you may also find the CIPD document 'The Menopause at Work: a guide for people managers' very useful.

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/wellbeing/menopause>

**below are some useful links relating to support services and information about menopause**

**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines**

These explain how a GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information>

**National Health Services**

This provides an overview of the menopause

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

**Getting the best from a GP appointment**

Gives guidance on speaking to your GP as well as tips for people

<https://henpicked.net/how-to-talk-to-your-gp-about-menopause/>

**Menopause information**

This provides an overview of menopause

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

**Premature Ovarian insufficiency (POI)**

POI information and support on early menopause

<https://www.daisynetwork.org.uk>

**Information on hysterectomy**

This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy

<https://www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk>

**Henpicked**

This provides information on managing menopause and an insight into people's stories

<https://henpicked.net/menopause/>

**Balance app**

<https://www.balance-menopause.com/balance-app/>

