



Menopause and the Workplace



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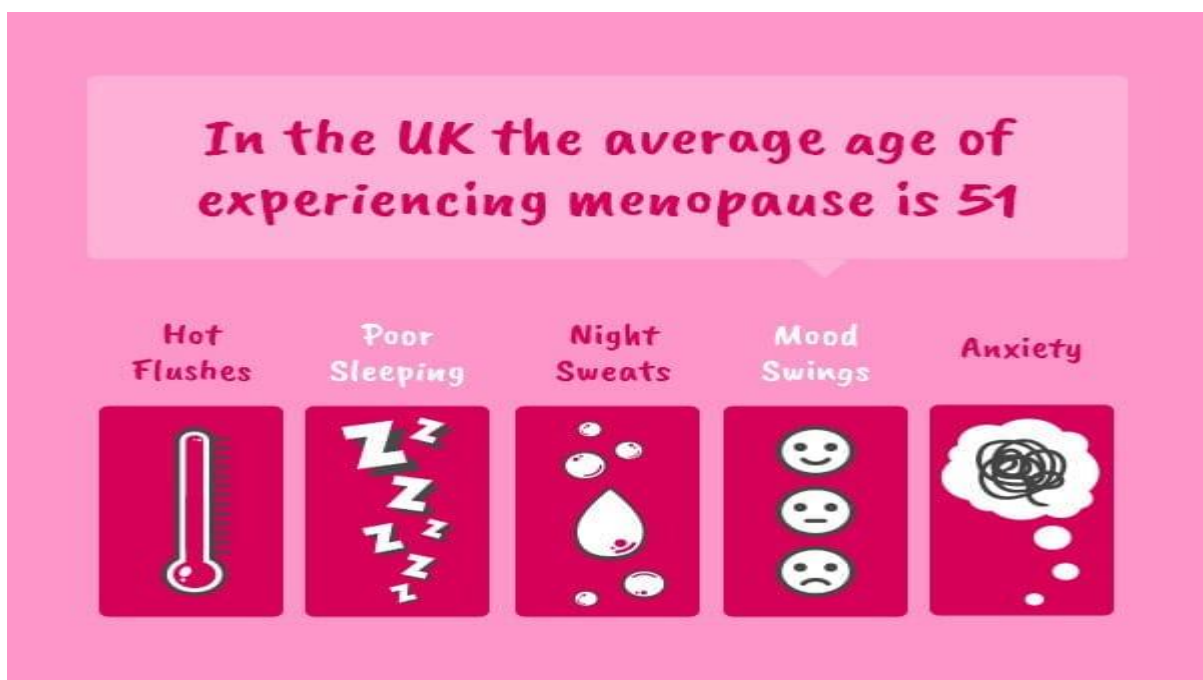
Menopause Affects:

Directly: Women between ages of 45 and 55;
Younger individuals if there has been a medical condition or surgery;
(May affect) affect non-binary; transgender; intersex individuals.

Indirectly: Husbands/Partners of those going through the menopause;
Other family members;
Work colleagues and friends.

The Menopause is not just a 'women's issue'.

This booklet uses the term Menopause to cover all 3 stages – perimenopause, menopause, post-menopause.



<https://promensil.co.uk/menopause-health-hub/>

Why is the Menopause a Workplace Issue?

A UK 2017 report ¹found that menopausal women are the fastest-growing workplace demographic, however despite this, many women struggle to manage the effects of the menopause (physical, psychological and emotional) in the workplace, meaning that for some leaving the workplace feels like their only option. This struggle to adapt to menopausal symptoms can be exacerbated by inflexible work expectations, and/or negative attitudes which may be acts of discrimination – this could include workplace banter/teasing, harassment, being over-looked for promotion/training, excessive/intrusive monitoring.

The impact on employers of individuals feeling they need to leave their employment due to a lack of support is the loss of experienced, valued, and talented employees leaving skills gaps, and knowledge behind which could prove both costly and difficult to recruit into. There is also the risk of time-consuming and costly Tribunal claims being lodged against the employer and work colleagues.

Legislation:

Whilst the menopause is not a protected characteristic in its own right under the discrimination legislation protection is in place under the following protected characteristics:

- Sex
- Age
- Disability

Whilst the UK Equality legislation applies a different definition to disability a case in the Employment Appeal Court in 2021 found that a social worker had been suffered discrimination due to the menopause (Ms M Rooney v Leicester City Council)².

The Discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013³ protects those with a long-term impairment that is likely to last for 6 months or more or may last for life. Some employees going through the menopause can suffer symptoms or the impact of the menopause for up to 4 years - even longer. Therefore, protection for those going through this life stage and the right to request reasonable adjustments could be considered if a claim were to be lodged.

Other legislation that employers should be mindful of is Health and Safety at Work (Jersey) Law 1989⁴ as this includes the 'welfare' of employees as well as general health and safety.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/menopause-transition-effects-on-womens-economic-participation>

² <https://www.gov.uk/employment-appeal-tribunal-decisions/ms-m-rooney-v-leicester-city-council-ea-000070-da-previously-ukeat-slash-0064-slash-20-slash-da-ea-2021-000256-da-previously-ukeat-slash-0104-slash-21-slash-da>

³ <https://www.jerseylaw.je/laws/current/Pages/15.260.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.jerseylaw.je/laws/current/Pages/05.300.aspx>

What is the Menopause?

This is part of the natural lifecycle and affects around half of the population and is a transitional process with the decline of oestrogen levels and then end of periods. There are many symptoms linked to the menopause with the number and extent of such symptoms depending on the individual going through this time. Whilst some individuals experience minimal symptoms, many can be impacted for 4 years or in some cases for longer. Therefore, it is important that the menopause is acknowledged, accepted and normalized throughout businesses, with an awareness of the impact it may be having at an individual level.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the more typical symptoms that may be encountered:

- Night sweats and/or disruptive sleep patterns (insomnia)
- Hot flushes
- Dizziness
- Palpitations and/or breathlessness
- Menstrual cramps/heavy bleeding and irregular periods
- Joint and muscle aches/stiffness
- Headaches and migraines
- Low energy and fatigue
- Loss of concentration
- Brain fog/memory loss/absentmindedness
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Mood swings and irritability
- Hair thinning/loss
- Skin problems
- Dry eyes
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Loss of confidence

Some individuals may also have existing health conditions which may worsen during this time examples of such health conditions can include (again a non-exhaustive list):

- Arthritis
- Mental health conditions
- Fibromyalgia
- Diabetes
- Chronic fatigue syndrome (this may include long Covid as well)
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Skin conditions

Reasonable Adjustments:

- Personal temperature control – eg USB desk fans, or a move away from any heat source
- Easy access to drinking water
- Adapt a workplace uniform
- Good access to bathroom facilities
- Flexible working
- Employee assistance lines
- Menopause champion

- Quieter working environment
- Catch up time for workloads
- Wellbeing sessions
- Where to go for further assistance (external links)

What Can Employers Do?

Think about:

- Raising awareness among managers of the impact on an individuals' health the menopause can have;
- Develop a culture whereby women feel comfortable about discussing any symptoms and the impact that has/or may have on their work;
- All employees have the right to request flexible working, and may wish to exercise their right to do this to enable them to assist with managing symptoms, however this can be offered without the formal steps being taken as part of the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- Accessible support – informal or formal (check if your employee health helpline covers the menopause);
- Consider if there are environmental changes that can be made to say ventilation/temperature or air conditioning – consider the use of individual desk fans;
- Develop a policy with helpful access points for employees where more information and/or services can be found, include the fact that the menopause maybe a long-term/ongoing health issue;
- Record menopause sickness/absence as an ongoing health issue rather than a series of individual shorter-term absences;
- Performance management policies to have the focus on the support to enable an employee to perform their role;
- Review sickness and absence policies.
- Support training (Henpicked are one of the menopause forums offering e-learning <https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk/elearning/>)

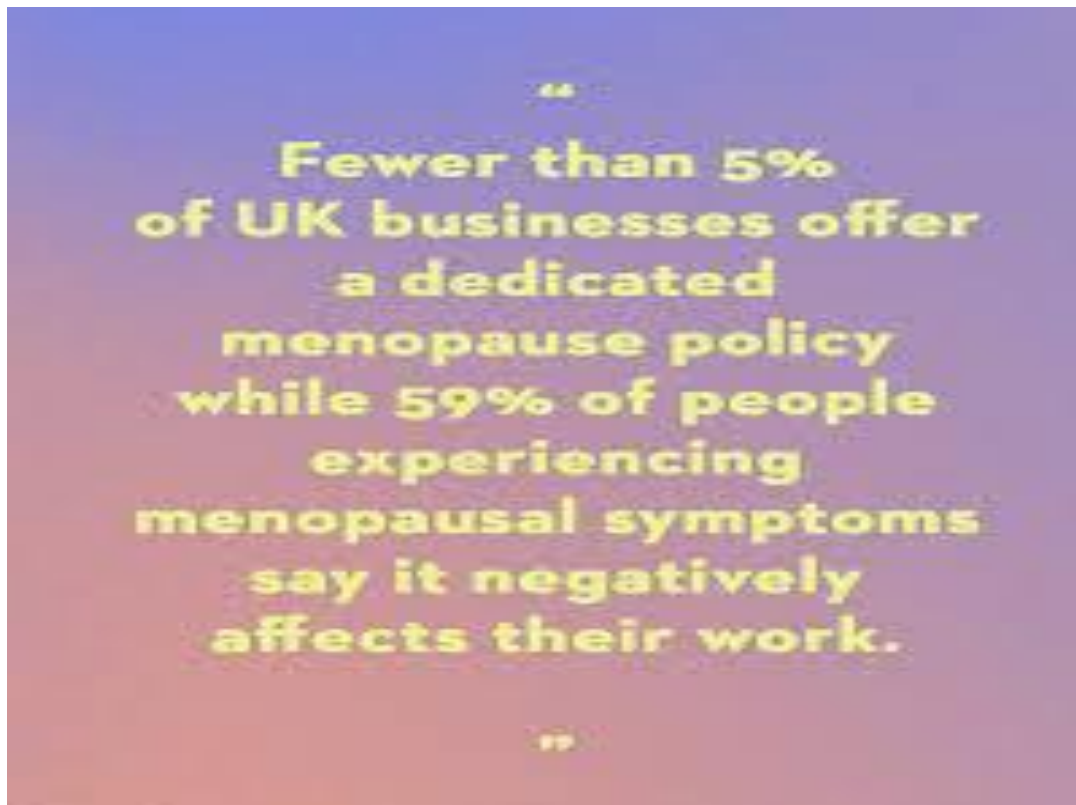
What Can Employees Do?

Think about:

- Finding out what options/choices there are for treatment of symptoms;
- Discuss with HR or a line manager/colleague you feel comfortable with and ask for some support if it is needed;
- Be honest about symptoms and any impact they may be having;
- Look for solutions to assist like taking more notes in meetings or setting up online reminders if these would help;
- Consider making a flexible working request;
- Do not suffer in silence;
- Familiarize themselves with any workplace menopause policy;
- Be open and honest when talking to their Manager/HR representative.

The Benefits of Supporting Employees Through the Menopause

- Lower sickness/absence levels;
- Demonstrates a company which supports disability/age/gender diversity;
- Increases retention so reduces employee turnover and costs;
- Supports wellbeing of employees and prevents discrimination claims;



<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/uk/health/a34918784/menopause-in-the-workplace/>

Writing a Menopause Policy:

Whilst there is currently no requirement to have a menopause policy, and there is no standard format it would be best practice to create such a document. The important thing to bear in mind that having created a policy does not mean that this is 'job done' it needs to be communicated well and worked with as a 'live' document. The menopause should not be dismissed as a 'women's issue', it needs to be seen as a legitimate concern of the employer to demonstrate a clear commitment that employees will be treated fairly. Below are some suggested sections for creating a workable policy:

1. A Statement of Intent

Set out the business' commitment to the wellbeing of all employees and including those suffering from symptoms related to the menopause. As a point of inclusivity ensure that it is not just a 'women's policy' and that it covers support all those directly and indirectly impacted.

2. Aim of the Policy

Outline the purpose of the policy, which includes providing help and support to employees through guidance. Refer to raising awareness to break down the stigma that surrounds this topic. Ensure that employees understand that they are supported and should feel confident in raising any issues about any symptoms and if needed to ask for adjustments to their work.

3. Definitions

Consider including a definition and a short explanation of what the menopause is and set out some of the typical symptoms (as per above) that may be experienced and how this may affect individuals in different ways.

Model Menopause at Work Policy

This model policy is intended to provide an example of good practice to employers and employees and is not intended to represent a statement of any legislation.

Statement of Intent

The employer is committed to the wellbeing of all employees including those suffering from symptoms/effects related to the menopause. This policy covers all employees who are either directly or indirectly impacted by the menopause.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all employees recognize the responsibilities they have in respect of:

- Understanding the menopause, symptoms and related issues and the affect this may have on work colleagues;
- Breaking down any stigma around the menopause and create an environment where employees can openly discuss or initiate conversations around the menopause;
- Using a fair and consistent approach to managing employees that may be struggling with symptoms of the menopause;
- Raising awareness and understanding among employees and outline support and adjustments that are available;
- Assisting in the reduction of menopausal related sickness absence whilst promoting retention of employees affected by the menopause;
- Listening sensitively to individuals who seek support and assistance for menopausal symptoms.

Definition of the Menopause

The menopause (of which there usually 3 stages – perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause) is part of the natural lifecycle and affects around half of the population and is a transitional process with the decline of oestrogen levels and the resulting end of periods. There are many symptoms linked to the menopause with the number and extent of such symptoms depends on the individual going through this time. Whilst some individuals experience minimal symptoms, many can be impacted for 4 years or in some cases for longer. Therefore, it is important that the menopause is acknowledged, accepted and normalized throughout businesses, with an awareness of the impact it may be having at an individual level. The menopause – whilst widely thought of as a women’s issue) may affect non-binary; transgender; intersex individuals.

How will this be Achieved?

All employees as well as the employer have duty under the Discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013 to prevent less favourable treatment on the grounds of Sex, Age and Disability, therefore we will ensure that employees are aware of these obligations and the impact of not fulfilling these by delivering training/guidance/information sessions.

The employer will ensure that all managers understand that although the subject of the menopause may be a difficult conversation as the first point of contact it is important to support those going through the menopause transition.

As some employees may struggle (or be too embarrassed) to start a conversation around the menopause the employer has provided a form that employees can complete themselves and provide to their line manager in order to request a meeting is set up. This form can be found at the end of this policy.

All sensitive health information shared will be treated in the strictest of confidence and will not be shared without the employee’s consent.

Absences directly linked to menopause will not be recorded in the same way as other absences so as not to place employees at a disadvantage.

The employer will advise employees via newsletters/posters/training sessions that they will make all attempts to support employees who may be struggling or having difficulties because of symptoms associated with the menopause.

Information on external organisations that may be able to assist will be made available to employees.

The employer will set up a menopause support network where employees can talk to others about the menopause and what they are experiencing.

Breaking down the Stigma

Employees may not feel comfortable talking about their menopausal symptoms as they:

- Are too embarrassed to share this personal information with others;
- Are worried they may place their job at risk or be seen to be not able to do their job;
- Are worried about the confidential nature of the conversation;
- May not know their line manager well or do not have a good relationship with them;

- Are worried that they may not be taken seriously;

Managers can help by:

- Ensuring the employee is comfortable and that the meeting will not be interrupted;
- Allow the employee to disclose only as much information as they wish to do so;
- Let the employee lead the conversation but still ask general questions;
- Treat the conversation as being strictly confidential and not share this information unless the employee agrees for them to do so;
- Not making any assumptions about an individual's symptoms as each person with go through this transition differently;
- Keep notes of what has been discussed and agreed, ensuring that any agreed outcomes are implemented.
- Offering the option of the employee speaking to someone else if they would feel more comfortable doing so.
- Any reasonable adjustments are put in writing and an indication of whether these are permanent or temporary – if they are temporary agree a review period to ensure the needs of the employer and the employee are still being met.

Other Policies:

The following policies should also be considered alongside this one:

- Flexible working
- Absence management
- Health and Safety
- Other?

Icebreaker Confidential Menopause Meeting Request Form

Employee's Name:	Date of Request:
Form Sent To:	Date Actioned:

I currently have the following menopausal symptoms: (Tick relevant boxes)	
Night sweats and/or disruptive sleep patterns (insomnia)	
Loss of confidence	
Hot flushes	
Dizziness	
Menstrual cramps/heaving bleeding and irregular periods	
Headaches and migraines	
Low energy and fatigue	
Anxiety and panic attacks	
Brain fog/memory loss/absentmindedness	
Other (please state)	

I would like some support and to discuss possible adjustments – please state suggestions

Below is for completion at the meeting

Date of Meeting & Summary of Discussion
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Agreed Outcome(s) Actions

Review Date:

Signed (Employee):

Signed (Manager):

External Resources:

Henpicked - <https://henpicked.net/>

MegsMenopause - <https://megsmenopause.com/>

Menopause matters - <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

Daisy Network (premature menopause) - <https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

Menopause Café - <https://www.daisynetwork.org/>