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for everyone

Menopause and the Workplace

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Why are we talking about the menopause?

- 1** There are 15.3 million women in employment in the UK, 13.62 million are employees
- 2** 4.4 million women aged 50-64 are in work
- 3** Female employment is at its highest rate
- 4** 9 million women work full-time and 6.3 million work part-time

Why are we talking about the menopause?



- Half the population are going to go through it, **so why is the menopause still such a mystery?** (BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour)
- 3 out of 5 women say going through the menopause has a **negative impact at work** (CIPD)
- Menopause symptoms can have a **significant impact on attendance and performance** in the workplace (NHS Employers)
- A recent survey* found **63%** of menopausal women say their working life has been negatively affected

* forthwithlife.co.uk

The menopause

- The menopause is a natural part of life that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline
- Symptoms can begin a long time before (perimenopause)
- However, around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age



- **Most women go through the menopause**
- **In the UK it is estimated that around 1 in 3 women are either currently going through or have reached the menopause**
- **88% of women workers who had experienced the menopause felt it has an effect on working life**
- **Around 6 in 10 had witnessed the issue being treated as a joke in the workplace**
- **47% of women who had taken a day off work related to menopausal symptoms had not told employer the reason for their absence**

Let's talk Symptoms ...

hot flushes

night
sweats

changes
in sleep
patterns

memory &
concentration
'brain fog'

dry skin

weight
gain

loss of
libido

mood
changes

heavy
bleeding

tinnitus

joint
stiffness

extreme
cold

heart
palpitations

UTIs
cystitis

thinning
hair

increased
risk of
anxiety &
depression

Impact on the workplace



Organisation/ HR/Managers

- Increased absence
- management time
- grievances/conflict
- reduced productivity
- loss of expertise
- direct/indirect costs
- allow poor culture
- gender/age bias
- risk legal claims
- reputation
- employee engagement

Individual

- embarrassed/suffers in silence
- makes a joke of it
- not coping/unsupported
- loss of confidence
- lower productivity
- increased absence
- grievances/conflict
- thinks of leaving
- stress, anxiety & depression
- considers legal action


Colleagues

- concern
- unsure how to help
- resentment
- added workload
- perception of fairness
- grievance/conflict
- unchallenged 'banter'/offensive environment



**Employers visibly
committed to
supporting
employees
impacted by the
menopause**

- Policies or strategies to support affected workers
- Develop a culture that allows staff to speak openly
- Training for all managers and staff to raise awareness
- Absence policies that take account of menopause related absence



**Individuals are
self aware and
ask for help when
needed**

- Be open and honest in conversations with line manager/HR
- Don't wait - Discuss with GP and talk through options to support health and wellbeing improvements
- Join a support network? Tap into available resources
- Don't struggle on your own
- Look at lifestyle changes that can help

Solutions, support and adjustments, (permanent or temporary)

changing
job
content

sabbaticals

access to
cold water/
facilities/
supplies

dignity &
respect
from
colleagues

information
posters &
signposting

desk fans/
ventilation

home
working/
job sharing

Flexible
working
hours

use of a
quiet room

adjust
uniforms/
PPE

training for
managers

empathy/
just to talk

coaching

EAP/
Occ Health

menopause
café/support
network

The Equality Act 2010:

- protects someone with a disability from direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- requires employers to provide '**reasonable adjustments**' so that an employee is not disadvantaged as a result of their disability/illness
- Menopause largely covered under three protected characteristics – Age, Sex and Disability discrimination

Further sources of information and support

- **Acas guidance on menopause at work**
<https://www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work>
- **TUC guidance on the menopause**
www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC_menopause_0.pdf
- **NHS information pages**
www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx
- **British Menopause Society** www.thebms.org.uk/
- **Menopause Matters** www.menopausematters.co.uk
- **The Daisy Network** www.daisynetwork.org.uk
- **CIPD** <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/menopause>