

Menopause

A Line Manager Guide

September 2021

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to raise awareness of menopause related issues at work and in particular assist managers in supporting staff who are experiencing the menopause and their associated symptoms. As a Manager you should become familiar with the Menopause Policy and this guide to create a supportive environment for employees experiencing the menopause.

Menopause Facts

51 years The average age to reach the menopause in the UK	4-8 years Symptoms of the menopause usually last between 4-8 years
1 in 100 will reach menopause before they are 40	8 in 10 people going through the menopause are in work





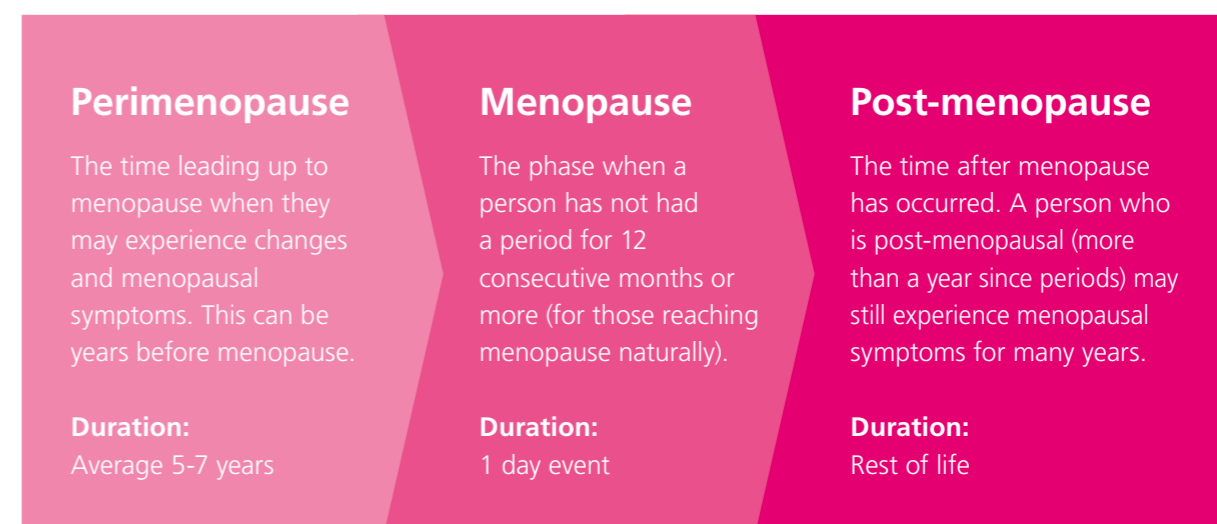
What is Menopause?

Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes during their lives for a number of reasons, including puberty, pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment, and menopause. These can bring about symptoms which could affect someone at work.

Menopause is a stage when hormones fluctuate and change, and eventually periods stop. The average age in the UK is 51, it's usually between the ages of 45-55. It can also happen much earlier, either naturally or as a result of surgery e.g. hysterectomy or illness.

What are the stages of Menopause?

The menopause transition





What are the symptoms?

Three out of four people going through the menopause will experience some kind of symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can be fluctuating and be felt to varying degrees. Each person's experience may be very different to colleagues or friends.

These are some signs and symptoms that those who have gone through the menopause have said affect them most at work. It is highly unlikely that all will be experienced or all at the same time.

Physical Symptoms

- Hot flushes during the day or night (brief and sudden surges of heat usually felt in the face, neck and chest).
- Difficulty sleeping/insomnia/fatigue
- Hair/skin changes
- Muscle/joint stiffness
- Headaches/migraines
- Change in periods
- Urinary issues – e.g. increased frequency

Psychological Symptoms

- Low mood/depression/changes in mood
- Brain fog/problems with memory recall
- Reduced ability to concentrate/focus
- Anxiety/worry/nervousness
- Loss of confidence

Research suggests that symptoms may differ amongst certain ethnic groups. Ethnic differences in some symptoms include aches in the back of neck and skull, soreness, palpitations, severe backache and frequently feeling nervous or tense.

What is the impact of Menopause?



Menopause can be a distressing time for an employee which they may find difficult to talk about for a variety of reasons including:

- **Embarrassment**
- **Fear of their manager being unsympathetic**
- **Not being taken seriously**
- **Lack of confidentiality**



What is your role as a Manager?

Managers are encouraged to discuss general wellbeing with employees throughout their employment. The easier you make it for someone to open up to you, the easier it will be to identify the support they need. You do not need to wait until an employee brings up the issue of menopause and should proactively approach employees if you notice that they may be having difficulties at work.

Not all individuals will feel comfortable in disclosing issues to their manager perhaps due to gender, age, religion. Managers are reminded to be mindful of this and to support the individual in being able to talk to another manager that they are comfortable with. It will remain the immediate line manager's responsibility to support the individual being mindful at all times of that person's confidentiality.

If an employee raises the issue of menopause with their manager, the manager is expected to listen and support the individual to identify ways in which this can be managed in the workplace. If the manager doesn't know what support they can offer then they should tell the employee they are going to read the policy and arrange a follow up meeting. Be open and ask what support they can provide.

Reasonable or tailored adjustments may be required. Each case should be considered on its own merits taking the individual needs and the work environment into consideration.

What supportive changes should we consider?



If the employee is experiencing some workplace challenges due to their symptoms, you should discuss whether there are any supportive changes/ reasonable workplace adjustments that may assist. Often only minor changes are required and here are some general ideas on possible adjustments to consider:

- A temporary change of work pattern.
- Reduce travel and consider dialling into meetings.
- More frequent breaks when needed.
- Allowing time off if an employee cannot carry on working that day.
- Providing a fan in the office environment.
- Providing a private area where the employee can rest for a while to help manage their symptoms.



How do I have a supportive conversation with an employee about the Menopause?

It is important for you to understand menopause and be prepared to talk about it. Your role as a manager is to help your team members be their best at work. To help you both, preparation is important. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both of you.

Do's

- Do know your facts
- Do talk about menopause
- Do follow our process
- Do keep an open mind and be flexible
- Do provide support and focus on the solution
- Do refer to HR and Occupational Health, if needed



Don't's

- Don't make assumptions about menopause
- Don't shy away from talking about menopause
- Don't share personal information without consent
- Don't address performance issues without checking about health concerns



Preparation for your meeting

Review this document and the Menopause Policy. Read up about menopause and know your facts. See the section below on internal and external support resources.

Book a meeting

Arrange a time to meet, allowing enough time for the conversation. Think about where you are meeting, finding a room which will allow the conversation to be confidential.

Encourage them to speak openly and honestly

Understand how menopause is affecting them at work, what they are doing to manage their menopause and what you could do to help. Listen actively and carefully. Discuss what support they would like e.g. workplace adjustments and timescale. Sometimes it helps just to know someone understands and is there to listen.

Agree with your team member what you can both do

If you need to, take time to find out further information and seek advice, if necessary. Set up another meeting to continue the conversation.

Do they want the conversation to be confidential?

Some people are happy talking about menopause openly, others are not. Talk to your team member about whether they want the conversation to be kept confidential or if they are happy to discuss it with colleagues. It's their choice.

Follow up

At the end of the meeting put a time in the diary to meet up again, whether that's to agree a way forward, to monitor progress or update. Please note that menopause symptoms can change over time.

If you need any help preparing for a conversation, please speak with your HR contact.

What additional support is available?



Employee's GP

We always recommend employees visit their GP if they are experiencing menopausal symptoms. Doctors can give advice on medical options, including HRT or other approaches to managing menopause including diet and lifestyle changes. The Menopause Policy has top tips for preparing for this conversation in Appendix 1.



Occupational Health

CMS is partnered with Health Partners for our occupational health service. Occupational health is primarily concerned with the effect of your work on your health and your health on your work. They can provide support and identify reasonable adjustments in the workplace. HR can refer employees for a consultation.



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

CMS offers an external Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) so if someone is struggling with managing their symptoms they can speak confidentially with a counsellor who can offer advice and support. The freephone number is 0800 980 6559 and is available 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The EAP also has a website portal general.lifeworks.com (access code: generaliuk). There are a number of resources relating to the menopause available such as articles and toolkits.



Efficacy - Psychological Support

Available across all offices, this confidential service provides emotional and psychological support through onsite (in London) and virtual clinicians. They deliver effective support and treatment, including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Issues and problems with which CBT can help include menopause symptoms such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, performance anxiety, low self-esteem and excessive worry. To book an appointment call 020 7929 7911 or email cms-cmno@efficacy.org.uk.



Menopause Champions

Our Menopause Champions are colleagues around the Firm who have been trained on the Menopause and can be contacted if you would like to talk to someone on this topic. The list of champions is [here](#).

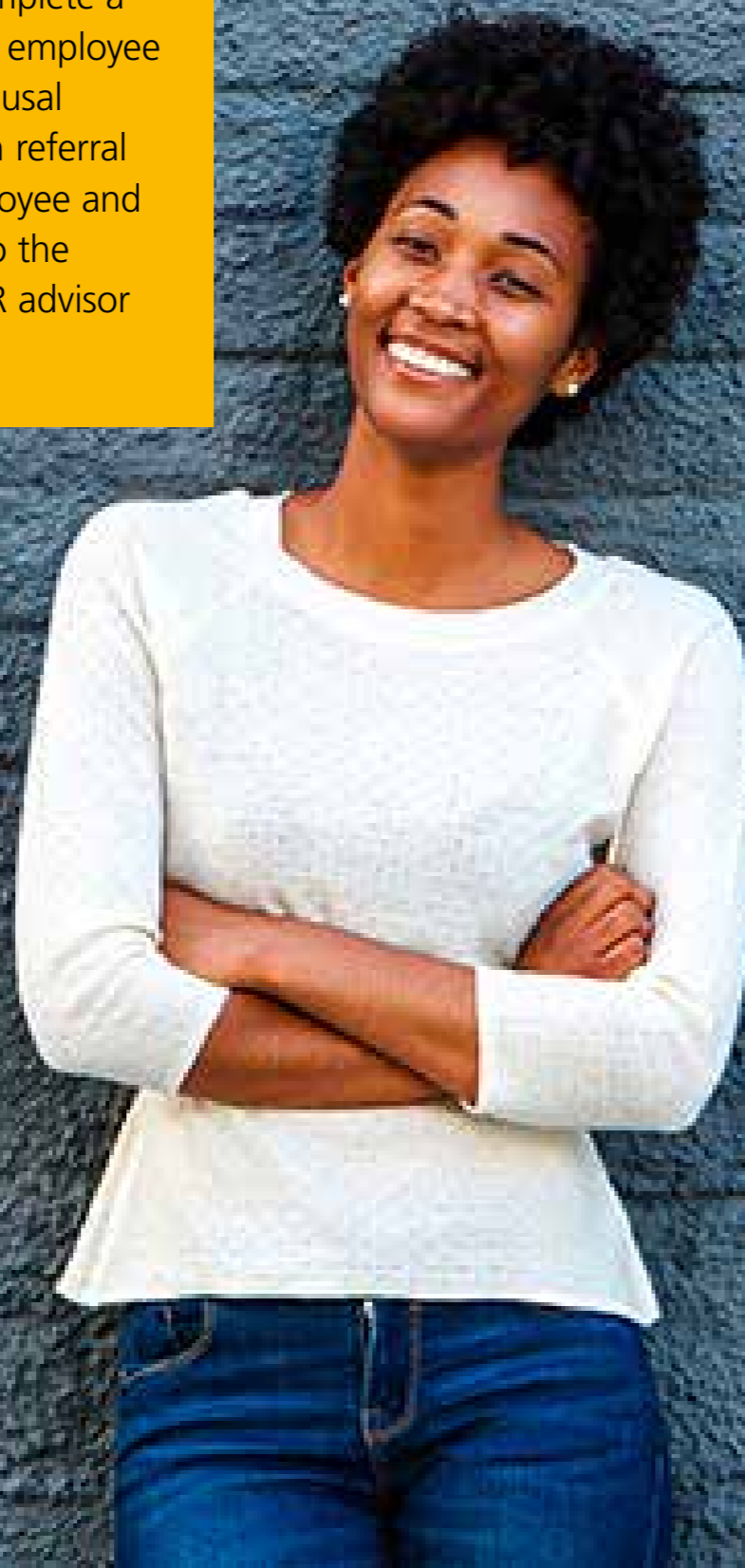


BAME Network

CMS appreciates that certain ethnic groups are sensitive to the issue of menopause and may find it difficult to talk about their symptoms, concerns or the overall impact of menopause on the day to day life. Specialist support can be provided if needed.

How should I record an individual's absence due to the menopause?

Employees should be asked to complete a self-certificate sickness form. If an employee is absent regularly due to menopausal symptoms an Occupational Health referral can be made to support the employee and identify reasonable adjustments to the workplace. Please contact your HR advisor to arrange this referral.



What external support is available?

Helpful Resources

- **NHS guidance on menopause**
www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
- **NICE** (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) [Menopause | Information for the public | Menopause: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng147)
- **Women's Health Concern website**
www.womens-health-concern.org
- **Menopause Matters**
www.menopausematters.co.uk
- **Healthtalk.org** – provides information about premature menopause including people talking about their own experiences.
<https://healthtalk.org/menopause/early-premature-menopause>
- **Daisy Network** – dedicated to providing information and support with premature menopause
www.daisynetwork.org
- **Surgical menopause: hysterectomy**
<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/hysterectomy/>
- **My Menopause Doctor**
<https://menopausedoctor.co.uk>
- **Henpicked** - *Menopause Hub* and *Menopause in the Workplace*
henpicked.net/menopause-hub



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