



Menopause Policies/Guidance Considerations





Things to consider:

Here, you'll find lots of advice and tips about what you can include in your menopause guidance, as well as other things to consider. Each organisation will be different, the nature of the organisation, its work and its leadership. And what you already have in place e.g existing policies, practices and training. We would also encourage you to attend one of our policy workshops, you can find details of these within the membership events calendar.

- Do you want a policy or guidance? If you choose a policy it should be easily integrated with your existing policies and follow the same structure and tone. Alternatively, you could choose guidance documents, or helpful information guides. Some begin with a menopause guidance document while they start the process of a menopause policy.
- How will you communicate your guidance? This is a crucial step. Think about how you will keep everyone in the organisation informed about what the guidance or policy is, how to access it and how to use it.
- Do you want separate colleague and manager guidance? Some organisations choose to produce two sets of guidelines, others chose one integrated document. There's no right or wrong way, as long as it is right for your organisation, contains the right information, is easily accessible and is well communicated.

Company Statement:

It's a good idea to open with a statement about why you are introducing this guidance and how this fits into your organisational objectives. This is also a good place to introduce the message that menopause awareness is for everyone - not just for women - a message which you can reinforce throughout.

Inclusivity:

Menopause is an inclusive subject. Anyone can be affected by menopause, either first-hand or through their relationship at work or at home. Here is an example inclusion statement:

Everyone's experience of menopause is different. People experience different symptoms, have different views or philosophies about how they manage them and different medical histories, too. This policy sets out how our organisation supports those impacted by menopause at work.

People of diverse gender expressions and identities experience menopause, and although we may use the terms 'women' 'female' 'her' when quoting specific research, this policy is focused on how everyone can be supported.



Menopause guidance - what to include:

What is menopause?

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in life that occurs when hormones change and eventually menstruation stops. Someone is said to have reached menopause when they have had no period for 12 consecutive months (for those reaching menopause naturally).

The average menopause age is 45-55, however it can be earlier naturally or due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when someone may experience changes and menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Postmenopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when periods have ceased for 12 consecutive months and for the rest of life..

When we talk about menopause in this guidance, we are referring to any of these stages.

What are the symptoms of menopause?

Everyone is different, some may not experience any symptoms at all. However, 3 in 4 may experience symptoms and as many as 1 in 4 of these may experience serious symptoms.

Be clear that these can be physical or psychological. Below is a list of the most common symptoms reported as having the biggest impact at work:

- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia or fatigue
- Hot flushes during the day or night
- Low mood, depression or changes in mood
- Nervousness, worry or anxiety
- Reduced ability to concentrate or focus
- Problems with memory recall
- Migraines or headaches
- Aches and pains
- Irregular and/or heavy periods
- Urinary issues, e.g. increased frequency



Menopause guidance - what to include:

Support matrix

You should never try to offer medical advice, but always recommend a colleague visits their GP. Then detail the support available in your organisation. This would usually begin with a conversation with the line manager. Other support could include:

- Employee Assistance Provider
- HR
- Occupational Health
- Support networks

Reasonable adjustments

Decide whether you want to detail these in your guidance. If you're doing separate guidance for line managers, this is the best place for this information. Adjustments vary from organisation to organisation, but can include things like flexible working, extra uniform/workwear, desk or hand-held fan and access to bathroom facilities.

Additional content

Once you have decided on your audience you can consider what additional content you may want to add. Examples might include:

- Talking to your healthcare practitioner
- Talking to your line manager
- Guidance for managers
- Where further support is available

There are some examples of these on the following pages

Design/Imagery

Consider what images and design you are using to position your documents so they feel positive accessible for everyone.





Example Additional Content:

Talking to your line manager about menopause

Research tells us that some people can find it hard to talk to their manager about how menopause is affecting them. However, your manager is there to help you be at your best at work. To help you both, preparation is important. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both you and your employer.

Prepare for your meeting. Check what support is available on the intranet or talk to HR. Keep a diary of your menopause symptoms and how they're affecting you. Think about what practical, reasonable adjustments might help, being flexible and ideally coming up with some different options. These may be for a short period of time while you work with your medical professional to alleviate your symptoms.

Booking a meeting means you'll have time and ideally a private space to talk and will be more likely to get your points across.

Explain your situation clearly. Talk about how menopause is affecting you at work, what you're doing to manage your menopause and what your line manager could do to help.

Discuss what support you would like e.g. reasonable adjustments and timescales. Or sometimes just knowing someone understands and is there to listen can help.

Agree with your manager what you can both do. They may need time to think about the best support. Remember, this may have been on your mind for a long time, but it may be the first time your manager has heard about it. Allow them time to digest the information and seek advice if necessary. Do you want the conversation to be confidential? Some of us are happy talking about menopause openly, others are not. Talk to your line manager about whether you want the conversation to be kept confidential or if you're happy to share with colleagues. It's your choice.

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

Above all, it's in both your best interests to find a good solution. All anyone wants is for you to be fit and well and do your job to the best of your ability. Menopause can be isolating if you don't talk to someone but remember over half the population go through menopause at some point, so you most certainly are not alone.



Example Additional Content:

Talking to your GP about menopause

If menopausal symptoms are getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. Here are some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait until symptoms feel unbearable. Often people feel they must 'put up' with menopausal symptoms, but if they are affecting you then there are things you can do and support available. Read the NICE guidelines. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines are used by your healthcare practitioner to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer. The guidelines for patients are really useful to read before you see your GP so you know what to expect.

Prepare for your appointment. Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you're feeling, any changes you've noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment. If you have any preferences about how you manage symptoms tell them that too e.g. if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or not. Your doctor will thank you for it and it's more likely that together you'll find the right solution faster.

Ask the receptionist which person is best to talk to about menopause. It might not be your usual GP, it could be someone who has had special training in the subject. Ask for a longer appointment if you think you need it. Some surgeries will do this.

Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion if you don't feel you've received the help you need. Don't be put off, you know how you're feeling and how it's affecting you.

Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. If there is and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral. Take your partner or a friend with you. They will know how the symptoms are affecting you, could support you at the appointment and also find out how to continue supporting you.

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms and what kind of help you need.



Example Additional Content:

Where more support is available

Relevant company policies (for example):

- Flexible Working Policy
- Advice, Support and Counselling policy

Here are some external links you may want to consider including:

NHS menopause information :

The NHS website has lots of information, visit:

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

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines

The NICE guidelines explain how GP's determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>

Early menopause

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) information and support on very early menopause.

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

Hysterectomy and oophorectomy information

For comprehensive information about hysterectomy, visit: [Women's Health Concern](#)

Women's stories

For more information on managing the menopause and an insight into women's stories, visit the Henpicked website at: <https://henpicked.net/menopause-hub/>

National Institute of Medicinal Herbalists

Here's a link to find a qualified medical herbalist in your area: <https://www.nimh.org.uk/find-a-herbalist/>

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and menopause, visit [Women's Health Concern](#)

Complementary/alternative therapies, visit [Women's Health Concern](#)

[Henpicked Menopause Hub](#) - expert advice to help make informed choices