


**Me and my
menoPAUSE**



All employees guide

Conceived and developed in collaboration by:



fox & cat®



**The Menopause
Charity**

Introduction

There are 33 million¹ women living in the UK and almost all will go through the menopause at some point in their life.

This means that within your team you are likely to be working with someone going through the menopause at some points during your career. This guide has been created to help make you aware of what going through the menopause entails and the challenges your colleagues may be facing.

Did you know?^{4,5}

- Women over the age of 50 are the fastest growing group in the UK workforce
- As the average age of the menopause is 51, symptoms can often occur at the peak of a woman's career
- Currently around 10% of women aged 45-55 have left their jobs due to the menopause
- The perimenopause can affect women outside of these age groups. It can bring issues such as extreme bleeding and pain that can also severely impact women in this stage of their life

About the menopause

The menopause is a natural stage of life when people who have a menstrual cycle stop having periods and can no longer get pregnant naturally. However, some people may experience a surgically-induced menopause because they have had their ovaries removed. People who experience the menopause can include trans people and people with variations of sex development (VSD)².

The age at which people start the menopause can vary greatly and each individual will have their own unique experience. While some people transition through the menopause smoothly, many will experience symptoms and endure the negative impact these have on their lives both at home and at work.

Often the menopause can have a significant impact on people's physical and mental health. They will likely need to make adjustments to their life both within and outside of work to allow for the changes to their body, mood and ability. The mental health impact of going through the menopause isn't just caused by hormone change, it's equally around the anxiety and stress caused by worrying about the impact on their ability to work, of stigma and of embarrassment.³

Therefore, it is important too that all members of teams are menopause aware. This means you will be better equipped to support those going through this phase of life in whichever way works best.

The law and the menopause

At the moment in the UK, there is no legal protection aimed at workers going through the menopause.

While the Government has appointed England's first ever Menopause Employment Champion to raise awareness of the issues of menopause and promote businesses supporting staff who are experiencing menopause symptoms in the workplace, it will be some time before the benefits of this will be seen across businesses.



The menopause is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 - so going through the menopause does not automatically give a worker workplace protection. Currently there are no plans to make menopause a protected characteristic.


However, employees should not be put at a disadvantage and treated less favorably because of their menopause symptoms, this could be discrimination if related to a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, sex. In some cases, the menopause could be considered a disability under discrimination law.

Therefore, we are reliant on businesses having policies in place that balance meeting the individual needs of women going through the menopause and the needs of the business.

The menoPAUSE framework

Anyone struggling through the menopause is encouraged to take a proactive approach to managing their menopause, ensuring clear communication with employers and line managers around individual needs.

To help guide them through this process, we've created a five-step framework using the acronym **PAUSE**  and we advise that they work through these stages when engaging with their employer about the menopause. A similar five-step **PAUSE**  framework has been developed for team leaders and line managers to help them prepare for such a conversation.

If you would like to know more about these **PAUSE**  frameworks please speak to your team leader or line manager.

Talking to someone who understands

We appreciate that not everyone wants or needs to discuss such a personal topic with their line managers / HR. Many people going through the menopause may prefer to try and manage their symptoms and any issues more discretely, but would still appreciate some guidance and support.

If you have had experience with the menopause yourself and would be interested in acting as a workplace menopause ambassador or advocate please speak to your team leader or line manager.

Closing thought

Collectively we all need to know, understand and talk more about the menopause and how it affects people. By reading this guide and educating yourself about the menopause you will be able to better understand the challenges that your colleagues might be facing.

Resources

Below we have highlighted a range of key resources available to those going through the menopause. There are many more resources and so please do not treat this as an exhaustive list:

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| <p><u>The Menopause Charity</u></p> | <p>Excellent range of useful, practical advice to help people manage the menopause.</p> |
| <p><u>Balance website Library of resources</u></p> | <p>Resources to provide inclusive and accessible information about the menopause to all women and trans and non-binary people.</p> |
| <p><u>Balance App</u></p> | <p>The free balance app allows people to track their symptoms, access personalised expert content, download a health report and share stories in the community.</p> |
| <p><u>NHS information on menopause</u></p> | <p>NHS advice and information for people about the menopause including symptoms, interventions and treatment.</p> |

Contributors

Me and my menoPAUSE has been co-created by the Healthcare Communications Association and fox&cat to help guide important conversations around the menopause.

Fox&cat has invested in this initiative as a part of its ongoing commitment to lessen the impact of pressure and stress that affects 7/10 people

working in the communications industry.

It draws on the expert advice from:

Jenny Haskey, The Menopause Charity
Antonia Katsambis, Independent HR Practitioner
Diane Wass, Managing Director, JPA Health
Lucy Heaton, Menopause Coach

- 1 The Menopause Charity. www.themenopausecharity.org [Accessed October 2023]
- 2 ACAS. Menopause at work. www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work [Accessed October 2023]
- 3 NHS Inform. Healthy Living, Women's Health. www.nhsinform.scot [Accessed October 2023]
- 4 Fawcett Society. Menopause and the workplace. 2022. www.fawcettsociety.org.uk [Accessed October 2023]
- 5 Careers Smart. Which jobs do men and women do? Occupational breakdown by gender. <https://careersmart.org.uk/occupations/equality/which-jobs-do-men-and-women-do-occupational-breakdown-gender> [Accessed October 2023]

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