
**Me and my
menoPAUSE**



**Team leader and
line manager 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 experiencing menopausal symptoms. This guide has been created to help you (as a team leader or line manager) hold appropriate conversations with members of your team who are going through the menopause.

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 working life 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

But it is important too that you as a team leader or line manager understand, know how to talk about, and know how to support those going through this phase of life.



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 favourably 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.

Best practice

Employers are encouraged to provide better support for women going through the menopause (including perimenopause), to raise awareness and reduce stress and anxiety regarding the topic.

This includes (but is not limited to):


- Making reasonable adjustments to working patterns and conditions
- Sharing information about the menopause with staff e.g. via intranet or notice board
- Introducing menopause training or a briefing session for managers
- Introducing menopause training or a briefing session for all staff
- Having a designated person who your teams can speak to about the menopause
- Ensuring a clear and available policy for staff including aspects like being able to take time off for menopause reasons

It is of course up to each business to decide what is right for them and to keep an open mind to the needs of their teams.


You should speak to your HR lead before engaging in a conversation around the menopause with a member of your team.

The menoPAUSE framework

Anyone experiencing symptoms because of the menopause that are affecting their ability to work is encouraged to take a proactive approach to managing their menopause, ensuring clear communication with employers and line managers around individual needs.

To help ensure that you are prepared for such a conversation, we've created a five-step framework using the acronym **PAUSE**  and we advise that you work through these stages

when engaging with a team member who has approached you to discuss the menopause.

People going through the menopause may have been provided with a similar five-step **PAUSE**  framework to help them prepare for meetings. You can proactively send the information sheet called "Guide for employees going through the menopause" to them (available on the HCA website) if they have not already been provided access to it.

P

Prepare yourself for likely conversations around the menopause

- If available, read your company policy around the menopause
- Check with your HR director around past experiences of similar conversations within your teams
- Do your own research to understand the symptoms your employee may be experiencing, the potential impact on their role, and the steps you can consider to support them
- Preparation is key; your employee will likely expect to hear from you about your business policy and position

A

'Actively' attend a meeting

- Be prepared for an open conversation
- Let your employee drive the conversation
- Actively listen to employee needs
 - Repeat back key areas of importance to you
 - Show you understand what's being said
 - Respond to any queries, questions or concerns as best you can
- Make notes of what is being said and what you are being told
- Reassure them that while the details of the conversation you are having is confidential, you may need to discuss any needs/requests within the business in order for them to be addressed

U

Understand your employee's needs

- When invited to do so by your employee:
 - Relay the position of the company
 - Reassure your employee
 - Co-create solutions that may help resolve their specific individual needs
- Empower your employee to write a plan that will support their needs

S

Support employees with their plan

- Review their individual plan when it arrives with you, and ask any questions
- Agree their plan internally and align on any internal communications required around it (if necessary, following agreement with the individual)
- Always respect and ensure confidentiality and privacy of the employee in all communications
- Communicate back to the employee any changes (if needed)
- Agree a time to check in with them again

E


Engage with your business

- Share your experiences back with HR, and with your peers to learn from each other
- Look for opportunities to refresh and update (or create if you have not yet got one) your policy around the menopause
- Consistency is key; ensure all leaders are working the same within your business and treating staff equally and fairly





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 following the five-step **PAUSE**  framework you can help those that you work with to better manage their menopause.

Resources

Below we have highlighted a range of key resources available to businesses to enable best practice around the menopause. Tools may also be available through your organisations existing benefits policies, such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), which can often provide support in mental and physical health queries for employees. Early Intervention and/or Occupational Health services may also be useful for employees and organisations where reasonable adjustments may be required.

<p><u>Menopause and the workplace</u></p>	<p>Government information including recommendations aimed at bringing about comprehensive change and support for those experiencing the menopause in key areas of Government policy, employer practice, and wider societal and financial change.</p>
<p><u>Supporting staff through the menopause</u></p>	<p>Resources from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) that cover how employers can support staff through every stage of the menopause, including: training managers, carrying out health and safety checks, developing a menopause policy, managing sickness and performance, appointing menopause and wellbeing champions.</p>
<p><u>Menopause in the workplace</u></p>	<p>Resources from Women’s Health Concern covering how the menopause can impact work, what it means for line managers and organisations, and available support.</p>
<p><u>Professional menopause guidance</u></p>	<p>Full resources and guidance on how to provide effective support for employees experiencing the menopause. Covers all aspects of the menopause at work, and includes useful downloadable resources.</p>
<p><u>Menopause Friendly Accreditation</u></p>	<p>A service that can accredit your business / policy as “menopause friendly”.</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]

Conceived and developed
in collaboration by:



fox & cat®

