


**Me and my
menoPAUSE**



**Guide for employees
going through
the menopause**

Conceived and developed in collaboration by:



fox & cat®



**The Menopause
Charity**

Introduction

You are not alone when you are going through the menopause. There are 33 million¹ women living in the UK and almost all will go through the menopause at some point in their life.

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.

The menopause can be incredibly liberating on many levels, because the hormones that have driven decisions, your body and your emotions since puberty are now taking a back seat. Meaning with knowledge and support, you can take control. There is also a wealth of support to help you transition through the menopause smoothly.

Often the menopause can have a significant impact on physical and mental health. You will likely need to make adjustments to your life both within and outside of work to allow for the changes to your body, mood and ability. The mental health impact of going through the menopause isn't just caused by hormone

change; according to a recent survey, it can equally be around the anxiety and stress caused by worrying about the impact on ability to work, of stigma and embarrassment.³

The more we talk and learn about the menopause the better things will be for the long-term physical and mental health of those going through the menopause, enabling them to function at their best no matter what they do at home or at work.

This in turn has a knock on effect for all; homes are happier, families are happier, businesses are more productive, the workplace is better, relationships are better, careers remain intact, future prospects (finances and pensions) are better, and everyone wins.

This campaign has been created to educate and support all those who may be involved in the decision-making within your business around addressing the individual needs of those going through the menopause.



Content overview

This guide has been created to help you prepare for conversations with your line manager or HR team about your menopause. It contains:

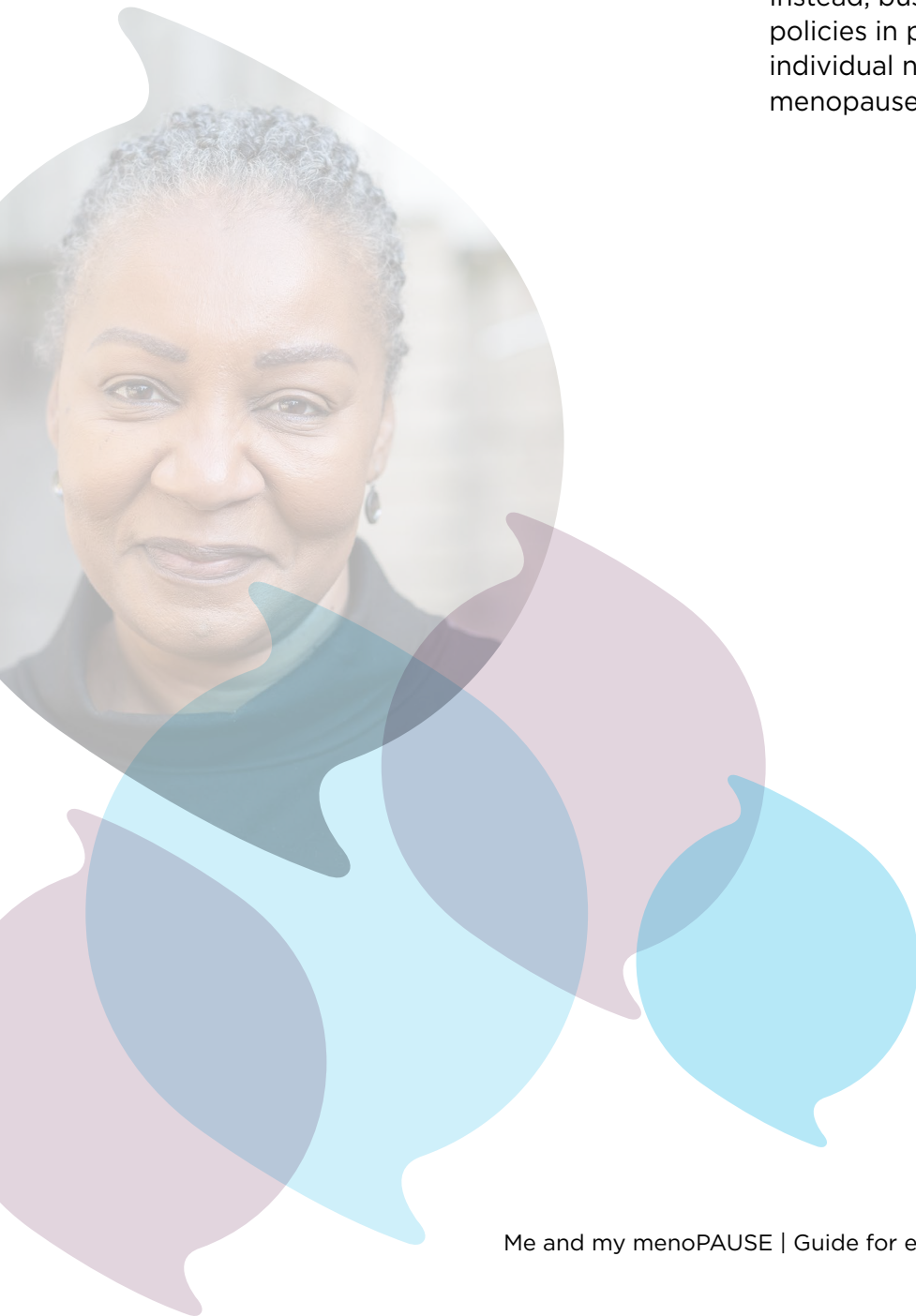
- Information on your legal rights
- A five-step framework to help guide a conversation and build an individual health and welfare plan that focuses on solutions for managing your menopause symptoms
- Information on talking to someone who understands the menopause
- Further resources

Your legal rights

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.

Instead, businesses are encouraged to have policies in place that balance meeting the individual needs of people 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 you through this process, we've created a five-step framework using the acronym **PAUSE**  and we advise that you work through these stages when engaging with

your employer about the menopause, if that's something you'd like to do.

We have made this information available to businesses working in healthcare communications and your team leader or line managers should have been provided with a similar framework to ensure that your conversation and their contribution will lead to the best outcome for all involved.

P

Plan your personal needs

- Read up on the menopause including the resources listed at the bottom of this guide
- Understand how your menopause is affecting you and what your needs are
- Use the [menopause symptoms questionnaire](#) from The Menopause Charity to help you note down the impact of your symptoms and your thoughts so you are prepared to talk to your GP and your employer
- Capture your key talking points

A

Arrange and lead a meeting

- Contact your team leader or line manager to arrange a meeting setting out your intentions, goals and timings
- During your meeting:
 - Clearly state your symptoms and the impact these are having on your ability to work
 - Use the insights you've found from background reading to support requests and appreciate that these are requests and not guaranteed
 - Clearly state your needs and wants (consider any potential impact of your requests on the team and organisation, and if/how they could be worked around, for example, if you need to turn off your camera during calls, consider what may need to happen in advance to make sure this isn't awkward for the team/client)
 - Be able to communicate the impact the menopause is having on you
 - Invite your team leader or line manager to share their position and policy. You may need to give them time to reflect, and so you may need to offer a follow-up meeting

U

Understand your employer's stance

- Be prepared for an open conversation
- Listen to your employers position
 - State parts of their position you agree with and feel free to discuss any aspects of their position that stand out to you
 - Respond to any queries, questions or concerns as best you can so your employer has all the information they need to help you
 - Ask questions, for example:
 - * Who from the business needs to be involved in any plan?
 - * What rights do you have for confidentiality around who is involved?
 - * Will there be any internal communications with teams?
 - * If so, who will do this and will you be able to review the communication beforehand?
- Make notes of what is being said and what you are being told
- If there are any areas that you need your employer to clarify for you, then ensure you get timings for these
- State that you will write a plan, including around 'work-arounds' and simple solutions, and will send it to your employer to review

S

Set a plan and share with your employer

- Write your plan making sure you include:
 - A summary of your needs aligned to any policy of guidance provided to you by your employer
 - Your preference on any internal communications to your teams
 - An indication of when you will review your symptoms and re-align on your needs and wants
 - Any synergies and differences with the policy of guidance provided by your company
- Share it with your employer and agree it with them
- Maintain the plan (arrange regular meetings and repeat stages as needed to ensure your change plan remains current and in line with your needs)

E

Engage with others

- Don't go through this alone. Find a support network, share your views, and remember confidentiality with your employer

Talk to someone who understands

We appreciate that not everyone wants or needs to discuss such a personal topic with their line managers / employers. 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 your concerns and issues are manageable, yet you feel you'd like to talk to someone in the workplace to share your thoughts (to feel like you have an ally and to see how others manage), it can be very helpful to talk to any fellow midlife colleagues / friends, or, if possible, a workplace menopause advocate or ambassador.

This may be a person within your company that is typically experiencing or has already experienced the menopause for themselves, and they have received extra training on the menopause to understand the issues affecting people.

Talking to such a person can ensure that you do not feel alone. You can share similar issues and talk about ideas and best practices such as simple solutions that might help you at work and at home. Any such discussions can remain confidential and can often be enough to help smooth the process.

Some businesses have a workplace menopause ambassador or advocate. They can often signpost you to resources and sources of further help so that you can personally manage any issues you face in a way that works more comfortably for you.

If your business does not have someone you can confidently speak to, then ask them to provide a means of support for you, or for them to consider appointing someone.



Closing thought

Collectively, we all need to know, understand and talk more about the menopause and how it affects people. The first step is understanding your own menopause, what's happening to you and what your needs might be. You can then bring this to the table in your personal and professional circles as you see fit.

Resources

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

<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</u> <u>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]