

Menopause at work

Managing the menopause

Managing the effects of the menopause at work is important for both employers and their staff.

For those experiencing symptoms it can be a difficult and stressful time. Everyone will experience the menopause differently and for some, symptoms can be quite severe and can affect people both physically and mentally.

The menopause is a natural stage of life which affects most women and other people who have a menstrual cycle. This can include:

- trans people – 'trans' is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
- people with 'variations of sex development' (VSD) – some people might prefer to identify as intersex or use the term 'differences in sex development' (DSD)

It's important for employers to be aware of all of the people who might go through the menopause and menopause symptoms and to support them all equally.

The menopause usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age but it can also happen earlier or later in someone's life. For many people symptoms last about 4 years, but in some cases symptoms can last a lot longer.

There are 3 different stages to the menopause:

- perimenopause
- menopause
- postmenopause

Some people might also experience early menopause or go through medical menopause earlier in their lives. These types of menopause can be medically complicated, so employers should consider this when supporting their staff.

All stages and types of the menopause are different and symptoms can vary from person to person, and range from very mild to severe.

[Find out more about the menopause and its symptoms on the NHS website](#)

Why it's important

For employers, the menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for staff and needs to be handled sensitively.

It's important for employers to be aware that the menopause and its symptoms can affect staff at any time. Being aware of this can help staff continue to do their job confidently and effectively.

The menopause can also have an impact on those supporting someone going through the menopause, for example a relative, partner, colleague or carer.

Although the menopause will only be experienced by women and other people who have a menstrual cycle, men should also be included in conversations and training. This is because they might be supporting others going through it.

Supporting and creating a positive and open environment between an employer and someone affected by the menopause can help prevent the person from:

- losing confidence in their skills and abilities
- feeling like they need to take time off work and hide the reasons for it
- having increased mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression
- leaving their job

If someone is discriminated against

If an employee or worker is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of their menopause symptoms, this could be discriminatory if connected to a protected characteristic.

[Find out more about how the menopause is related to the law](#)