

Menopause at Work



We need to break the stigma around the menopause at work and create a working environment where employees and managers feel confident to discuss any practical adjustments that may be needed in order to support women facing menopausal challenges.

Menopausal women are the fastest-growing demographic in the workforce, so it's important now more than ever to be able to speak openly about menopause at work.



In a survey of 1,000 adults in the UK, the British Menopause Society found that 45% of women felt that menopausal symptoms had a negative impact on their work and 47% who needed to take a day off work due to menopause symptoms say they wouldn't tell their employer the real reason.

What is the menopause?

It's a natural stage of life when a woman's oestrogen levels decline, and she stops having periods. As menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years, it is best described as a 'transition' rather than a one-off event.



When does the menopause happen?

The menopause generally happens between 45 and 55, but for some women can be earlier/later. The 'perimenopause' is the phase leading up to the menopause, when a woman's hormone balance starts to change. Women are said to have reached the menopause when they haven't had a period for a year.

The symptoms last on average for four years, but for some can last much longer. The average age for a woman to undergo the menopause in the UK is 51, but around 1 in 100 experience it before the age of 40. This is known as premature ovarian insufficiency (POI), premature ovarian failure or 'premature menopause'.



It is called 'early menopause' if it occurs between the ages of 40 and 45. Often, there is no clear cause for the early onset of menopause

What are menopausal symptoms?

- Psychological issues such as mood disturbances, anxiety and/or depression, memory loss, panic attacks, loss of confidence and reduced concentration
- Hot flushes (brief and sudden surges of heat usually felt in the face, neck and chest)
- Sleep disturbance that can make people feel tired and irritable
- Night sweats (hot flushes that happen during the night)
- Irregular periods and/or periods can become light or heavy
- Muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs) including cystitis
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Palpitations (heartbeats that become more noticeable)
- Vaginal dryness
- Skin changes (dryness, acne, general itchiness)
- Reduced sex drive

If you are a manager:

There are lots of resources available that can help you understand more about the menopause and the support women experiencing menopausal symptoms in your workplace may need.

There are solutions available to help women continue to work comfortably during menopause.

Things you might want to consider offering employees:

Simple changes to someone's role or working environment can help ensure the menopause does not become a barrier to performance.



Where do you start? Talking about the menopause needs to become part of work place culture – an open environment where menopause can be discussed, recognised and not seen as something either taboo or embarrassing.

There are recommendations about working conditions for menopausal women produced by the European Menopause and Andropause Society (EMAS):

- Provide training for employees and managers to raise awareness and convey that the menopause can present difficulties for some women at work.
- Facilitate discussion about troublesome symptoms. Employers can help by communicating that health-related problems such as those experienced during the menopause are normal.
- Manage the temperature and ventilation of the workplace and see how they might be adapted to meet the needs of individuals. This might include having a desktop fan in an office or locating a workstation near an opening window or away from a heat source.
- Consider flexible working hours or shift changes.
- Provide access to cold drinking water in all work situations.

- Where uniforms are compulsory, flexibility is helpful. This might include the use of thermally comfortable fabrics, optional layers, being allowed to remove neckties or jackets, as well as the provision of changing facilities.
- It may help to have access to a quiet room for a short break to manage a severe hot flush.

Other ways you can help

- Make sanitary products available in washrooms.
- Consider a temporary adjustment to someone's work duties.
- Signpost to counselling services via Licensed Trade Charity Helpline
- Regular, informal conversations between manager and employee may enable discussion of changes in health, including issues relating to the menopause. Such conversations can identify support at work that can help women remain fully productive and encourage them to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP.

How the Licensed Trade Charity Can Help

Support for individuals:

LTC are available 24/7, if you'd like to talk about your situation, we can help you. Call our helpline for confidential, free of charge support. If you are experiencing menopausal issues call our helpline on 0808 801 0550. Our Helpline Team will listen without judging and will work with you as best they can to achieve a positive outcome.



If you prefer, you can visit our website at www.licensedtradecharity.org.uk, it's full of useful information about the kind of issues we know people who work in the licensed trade face.

Support for organisations

We would encourage all licensed trade organisations to take positive action and support all team members affected by menopause in the workplace.

A member of LTC can come and deliver a talk on how you can help your team with the support of LTC.



Other ways LTC can help

Many operators have asked us to take part in their induction days, training sessions and GM meetings to make sure managers are equipped with greater awareness of the range of services we offer so that they can better support their teams.

If you'd like us to join one of your sessions or meetings just drop us an email.

marketing@ltcharity.org.uk

Call the FREE 24/7 Helpline

0808 801 0550

Note: This guide is not exhaustive. It has been produced by the Licensed Trade Charity to provide you with an overview of the issue in question. We are grateful to all specialist organisations who support our charity and are available to you should you be experiencing this particular issue. Disclaimer: LTC has used reasonable care in compiling and presenting this information, but it does not assume liability for any errors or omissions in the content or any third party sources. LTC expressly disclaims liability for errors or omissions.