Menopause at work

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 around half of the population. This can include:

- women
- 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
- intersex people – some people prefer the term ‘differences in sex development’ (DSD)

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 surgical 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

1. 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 any of their staff at any time, including:

- women, trans and intersex people going through the menopause
- relatives, colleagues and carers who are supporting someone going through it

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
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 conditions such as stress, anxiety and depression
- leaving their job