

## Menopause Guide – Supporting Women at Work through the Menopause

### Guide for Managers

This guide outlines the symptoms that some women suffer when going through the menopause, how these symptoms can affect them at work, and practical advice and guidance for managers to help support these colleagues.

#### Main topic areas

- Overview
- What is the menopause?
- How does it affect women?
- How might it affect work?
- What do I need to do as a manager?
- Where to go for further information
- Forms

#### Getting help

**Contact your manager if you have any queries about this guide.**

Managers can obtain advice by:

Calling the HR Services Advice Centre on 0345 606063

Managers working for Parcelforce Worldwide should call 0345 6042787

For web access go to:  
<https://www.psp.royalmailgroup.com>



# Supporting women at work through the menopause

## Guide for managers

### Overview

This guide provides details on what the menopause is, the common symptoms and also advice and guidance for managers so they can support female colleagues at work.

This should be read in conjunction with [Workplace Adjustment Agreement](#) and where guided [Standard 2B.1 Person Specifically at Risk Guidance](#).

This guide is effective from 1 November 2019.

### What is the menopause?

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally. Periods usually start to become less frequent and more irregular over a few months or years before they stop altogether. The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, but occasionally occurs much earlier or later than this.

### How does it affect women?

In Britain, nearly three quarters of women seek advice from their GPs about menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on a woman's everyday activities. Common symptoms that may affect work are: -

- [Hot flushes](#)
- [Night sweats](#)
- [Difficulty sleeping](#)
- [Low mood](#) or [anxiety](#)
- Problems with memory and concentration
- Urinary tract infections

Although most women can carry on with their personal and working lives normally, for others, their symptoms can have an impact on their lives. Symptoms typically last around 4-5 years but for some women can last up to 12 years.

Treatment can include Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Reducing stress, maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy, balanced diet and exercising regularly can improve some menopausal symptoms.

### How might it affect work?

Work can affect women going through the menopause in various ways.

Hot flushes can be very uncomfortable and also embarrassing when they happen at work. The best way to manage these is to stay cool and to cool down quickly if one happens. Workplace factors can make this more difficult, for instance, in some workplaces air conditioning is not well controlled or it is not possible to open windows or improve ventilation; in other radiators or sun shining directly through windows may cause hot areas in the office.

Having the heating at a lower level, moving their workstation to a cooler area of the office, having a desk fan, avoiding hot drinks and access to cool drinking water will all help.

Women who have to wear a uniform may need to be allowed to wear

alternative looser fitting, thinner garments or layers that can be easily removed if they are having flushes or sweating.

Stress at work is likely to make symptoms of depression and anxiety worse and can also make hot flushes worse.

Difficulty concentrating and poor memory may make some tasks problematic and different approaches to managing information may be necessary.

For some people flexible working times may help to avoid travelling on busy transport or cope with disrupted sleep.

### What do I need to do as a manager?

Women who are experiencing problems at work due to the menopause need support from their manager. As with any longstanding health-related condition this is crucial and can make a major difference. Some practical steps you may consider taking include:

- Talk to the individual in an understanding and supportive way.
- Support them where possible by making any necessary changes to help them to keep cool, manage stress levels and manage any problems that they are having with memory or concentration.
- Signpost them to helplines and sources of advice and guidance for managing their symptoms and lifestyle.
- Menopausal women may experience bouts of feeling unwell at work, so managers should take a flexible and sympathetic approach to requests for a break or return home if they become unwell at work.

### Key points to consider when managing an employee going through the menopause

- Not everyone wants to talk about issues so personal to them, but if they do you need to listen and be understanding of the issue.
- Women may feel uncomfortable going to their line manager, especially if they are younger or a man. In such cases, the woman should be encouraged to speak confidentially to a different manager or the First Class Support helpline
- You may wish to consider offering an occupational health referral. For further guidance contact HR Advice and Support.

### Where to go for further information

The Getting Help box on the front page tells you where to find further information.

Guidance is also available on the Policy and Information Site on PSP (HR pages of the intranet for non-PSP users).

**First Class Support helpline:** is a confidential and independent helpline - a place to turn to if employees have any problems. The service is free and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Employees can call 0345 266 5060 or visit [www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk](http://www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk) or download the 'Lifeworks' app – sign up using their unique invitation code (RMG-their pay number), e.g. RMG-12345678.

The Feeling First Class website gives ideas on taking up a healthy lifestyle to help manage menopausal symptoms, [www.feelingfirstclass.co.uk](http://www.feelingfirstclass.co.uk) use the code FFC1 to sign up.

If the individual is experiencing mental health related issues e.g. depression and/or anxiety, the following tools are available: -

- eLearning Mental Health Awareness and Managers Mental Health - Healthy Minds Matter on PSP Success Factors,
- Feeling First Class – Mental Health for stress risk assessment and other tools and guidance for managing stress [Feeling First Class - Mental Health](#)

Other websites that may be of benefit are: -

[NHS guidance on the menopause](#)

[Women's health concerns](#)

[Menopause matters](#)

[Menopause exchange](#)

[Manage my menopause](#)

## **Forms**

The following form can be found on the Policy & Information Site:

- [Workplace Adjustment Agreement](#)

The following form can be found on the Safety, Health and Environment site:

- [Person Specifically at Risk Assessment](#)