

## Supporting staff

It's important for employers to support staff through every stage of the menopause. Having early and regular follow-up conversations with staff to understand their needs can help make sure support and procedures are in place so they can continue to do their job effectively.

[Find out how to talk with staff about the menopause](#)

Employers should consider how the person's job role and responsibilities could make their menopause symptoms harder to deal with, for example if:

- they work long shifts
- they cannot take regular toilet breaks
- their job requires a uniform which may cause discomfort
- their job does not have much flexibility

There are several steps employers can take to make sure they have early conversations with staff and find solutions before problems arise.

## Training managers

It can give staff more confidence to talk to their managers about the effects of the menopause on their work if they know the managers are trained to:

- talk and listen sensitively
- find ways to give support
- have knowledge of the menopause and its effects
- know what support and guidance the organisation can offer

Employers should train all managers, supervisors and team leaders to make sure they understand:

- how the law relates to the menopause
- how to talk with and encourage staff to raise any menopause concerns
- how different stages and types of menopause can affect staff
- what support and workplace changes are available to staff
- how to deal with menopause issues sensitively and fairly
- who can be affected by the menopause

Acas provides:

- [training on supporting a diverse workforce](#) – including on menopause
- [free webinars](#) – including on menopause

## Carrying out health and safety checks

By law, employers are responsible for the health and safety of all staff, including those working from home.

Employers must conduct a risk assessment of their staff's work and workplace, including any work from home. This includes:

- generally assessing health and safety risks at work
- minimising, reducing and where possible removing health and safety risks for staff

For the menopause, a risk assessment is about making sure symptoms are not made worse. For example, by the workplace or ways of working.

A risk assessment could include:

- the temperature and ventilation of the workplace
- the material and the fit of the organisation's uniform, if there is one, and whether it might make staff going through the menopause feel too hot or cause discomfort
- whether there's somewhere suitable for staff to rest if needed, for example a quiet room
- whether toilet facilities are easily accessible
- whether cold drinking water is available
- whether managers and supervisors have been trained on health and safety issues relating to the menopause

Employers should review risk assessments regularly to make sure their staff's working environments remain safe and healthy.

Employers should also make sure that staff know they can approach their managers to raise any health and safety issues and will not be put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably if they do.

[Find out more about risk assessments on the Health and Safety Executive website](#)

## Developing a menopause policy

To help staff feel supported it's a good idea to have a policy specifically for the menopause. This should be shared across the whole organisation, be regularly reviewed and be the basis for any training the organisation gives to managers.

Having a menopause policy can help everyone in the organisation understand:

- what the menopause is and how it can affect people
- how it affects everyone differently
- what support is available to staff affected by it

The menopause policy could also:

- explain what training is provided to managers, supervisors and team leaders
- explain who the organisation's point of contact is for queries related to the menopause
- show how the organisation is open and trained to talk and listen sensitively about the effects of the menopause
- include the employer's commitment to support its diverse workforce and to prevent discrimination

Even if there is a policy, employers should make some allowances when supporting staff through the menopause because everyone's experience will be different.

You should also review your current policies to make sure they cover any links with the menopause. This could include reviewing policies on:

- health and safety
- wellbeing
- diversity and inclusion
- flexible working
- absence management
- sickness reporting

## Managing sickness absence and job performance

Because the menopause can be long term and affects everyone differently, managing absence from work should be handled sensitively.

Employers should keep talking with their staff and be prepared to:

- make changes to help staff continue to work
- take into consideration any performance issues which might be because of menopause symptoms

It's a good idea for employers to talk to staff about any changes that could help them do their job. Staff should also be given a reasonable amount of time to adjust to any changes made.

When someone is off sick because of the menopause, the employer should record these absences separately from other absences. This is because there may be times when it could be unfair or discriminatory to measure menopause-related absence as part of the person's overall attendance record.

It's also good practice for an employer to allow staff to go to medical appointments related to the menopause. There is no law for this type of time off, but employees and workers might have a right to paid or unpaid time off written in their employment contracts.

Employers must not discriminate against someone because of their menopause symptoms.

[Read more about how menopause relates to the law](#)

## Having menopause and wellbeing champions

Having a menopause or wellbeing champion at work could help people affected by the menopause. The champion could be a point of contact if staff need advice, or someone to initially talk to if they are not comfortable talking to their managers.

With support from the champion, employers, HR and managers could:

- run workshops in the organisation to raise awareness among staff
- let all staff know that the employer will try to support those having difficulties because of symptoms, for example through posters or newsletters
- check that health and safety risk assessments cover the different stages of the menopause
- set up a support network for staff affected by the menopause
- tell staff where they can find more information

It's also important that employers raise awareness among staff that they will handle menopause in the workplace sensitively, and with dignity and respect.