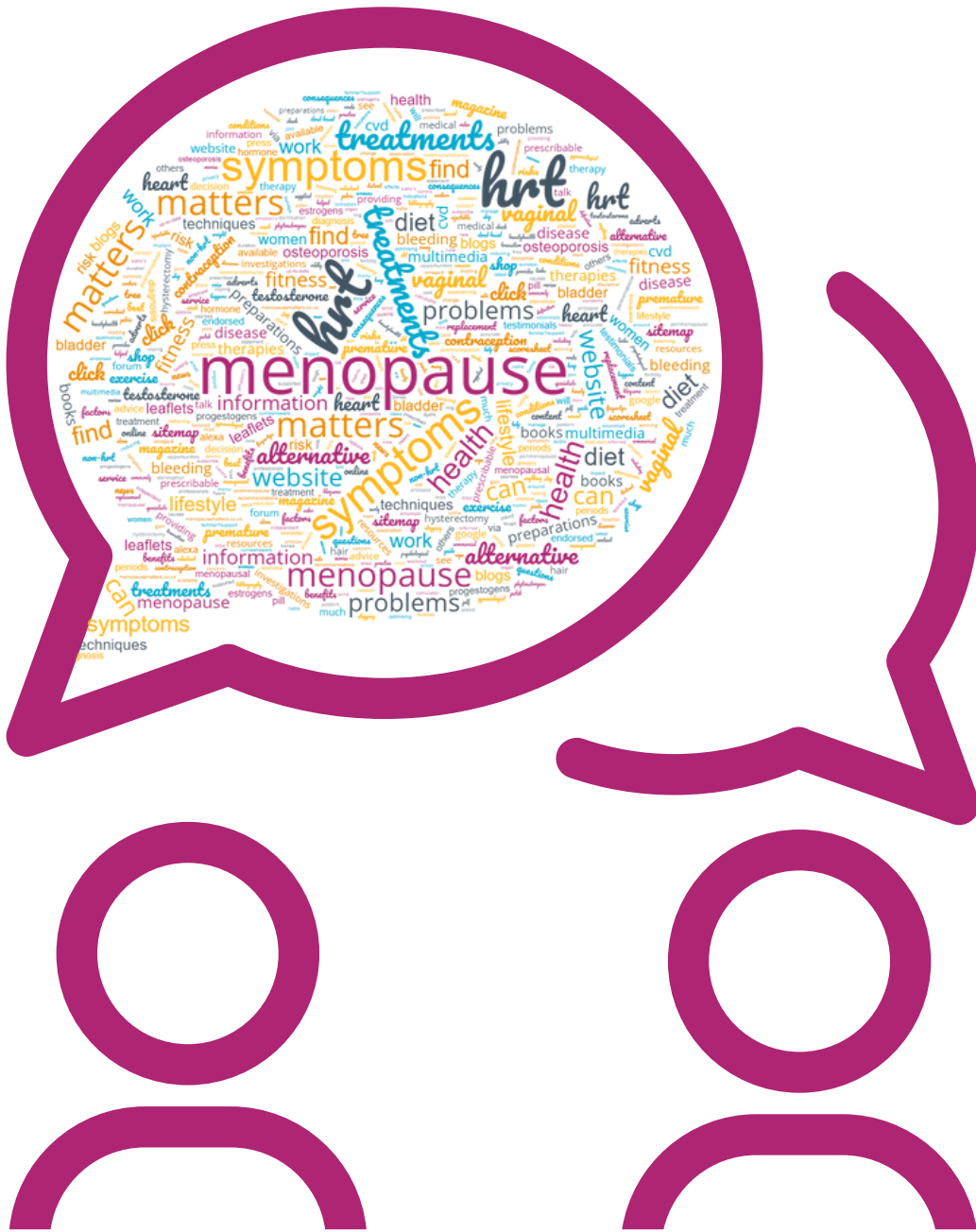


Menopause Guidance Document For Line Managers



Using this guide

The aim of this guide is to help line managers working across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight system, including NHS organisations and primary care, to support their teams and staff going through menopause. This guide should provide line managers with a better understanding of what menopause is and the impact, as well as key information on how to support staff manage the effects of the menopause transition at work.

This guide has been designed to use in conjunction with your organisations' local menopause policy, and other relevant local policies. It includes practical tips for line managers, suggestions of reasonable workplace adjustments, and details on specific training available.

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Introduction

Menopause is a phase of life and everyone's experience of menopause is different. While some may sail through it with barely a symptom, it isn't an easy transition for all. By increasing awareness of the menopause, encouraging open conversations, and with the right support, we can help to improve the experience at work and in personal lives too.

“ Today's workforce has nearly four million employed women aged between 45 and 55 years of age, making the menopausal age group the largest proportion of the current workforce. ”

(Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2022).

Research shows that the majority are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager or ask for the support or adjustments they may need. Across Hampshire and Isle of Wight we want to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and supported to have open and honest conversations about menopause, never feeling that the subject is taboo or off limits.



Our goal is for everyone to be able to talk about the menopause more openly in the workplace and we want to ensure that everyone knows what support is available.

This guidance, which accompanies local organisational menopause policies, seeks to give line managers the knowledge and skills to support colleagues.

6 IN 10 WOMEN SAY MENOPAUSE HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THEIR WORK

8 IN 10 PEOPLE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY MENOPAUSE ARE IN WORK

DID YOU KNOW?

1 IN 4 CONSIDER LEAVING WORK DURING THEIR MENOPAUSE

THE MAJORITY ARE UNWILLING TO DISCLOSE MENOPAUSE-RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS TO THEIR LINE MANAGERS

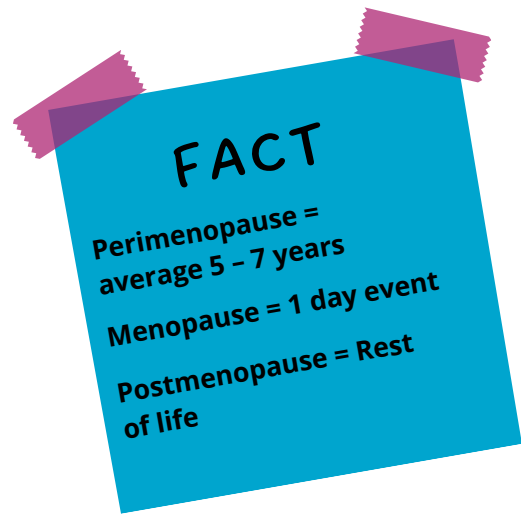
1 IN 10 DO LEAVE THEIR JOB DUE TO MENOPAUSE

What is Menopause?

When we talk about menopause in this guidance, we are referring to any of the following stages.

PERIMENOPAUSE

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when changes and menopausal symptoms may be experienced. This can be years before menopause, on average between 5 – 7 years.



MENOPAUSE

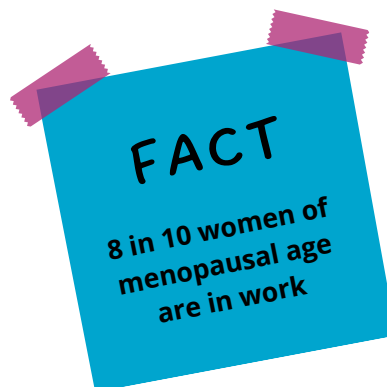
Menopause is defined as a biological stage in life that occurs when hormones change and eventually menstruation stops. Usually it is defined as having occurred when someone has not had a period for 12 consecutive months (for those reaching menopause naturally).

The average menopause age is 51 however it can be earlier naturally, or due to surgery, illness, or other reasons.



POSTMENOPAUSE

Postmenopause is the time after menopause has occurred. This starts when there has not been a period for 12 consecutive months and continues for the rest of life.



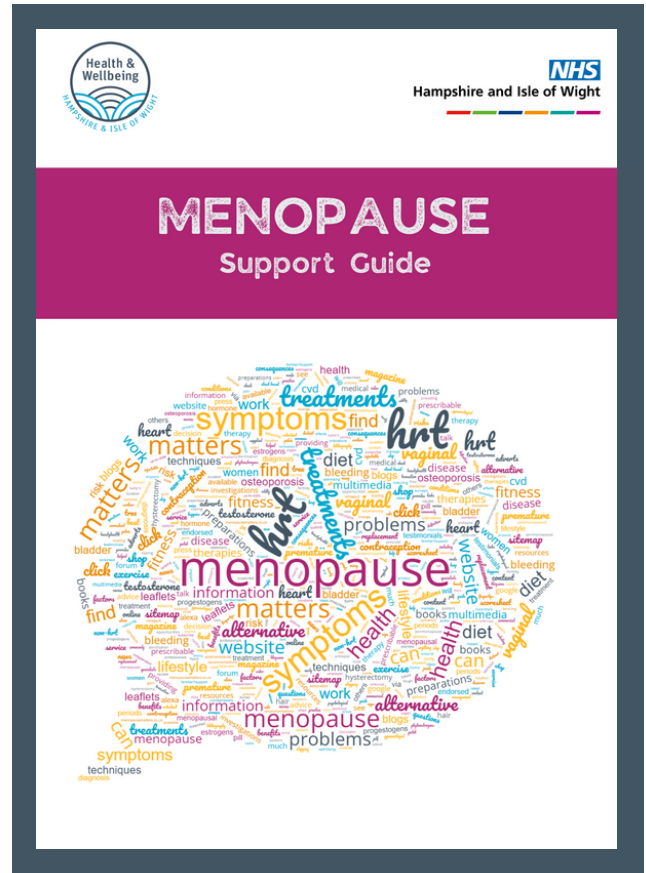
What are Menopause Symptoms?

During menopause, oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone hormones can be out of balance. Oestrogen levels fluctuate and progesterone declines which is when someone may start noticing symptoms.

In general, hormonal changes can result in a wide range of symptoms, both physical and psychological. Three out of four women will experience symptoms of some kind when going through the menopause and these could last between four and eight years. Others may not notice any major changes. Everyone is individual and therefore your experience may be very different to colleagues or friends.

Refer to our **Menopause Support Guide** for more information and some of the more common signs and symptoms of the menopause.

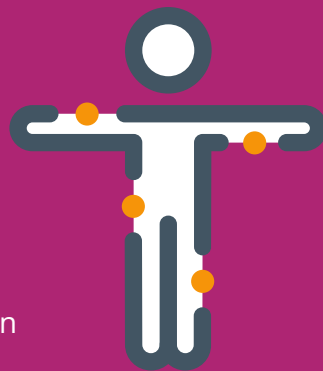

[CLICK HERE](#)



It is important to remember everyone is individual and therefore each experience may be very different, including the symptoms, severity and impact on daily living.

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Hot flushes
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Hair/skin changes/irritation
- Headaches or migraines
- Change in periods (irregular or heavy)
- Weight gain
- Aches and pains
- Urinary issues eg increased frequency



PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

- Emotional/mood swings
- Brain fog
- Problems with memory recall
- Feeling low
- Lack of libido
- Tearful
- Nervousness, worry or anxiety
- Poor concentration
- Irritability

Ultimately, it is everyone's personal choice about how to manage menopause symptoms and long-term health.

Inclusivity & Menopause

It is important to have an inclusive approach to the menopause and recognise that it is not only something that happens to heteronormative women who are in their fifties.

The menopause can affect non-binary and transgender colleagues, and they, alongside those from more diverse communities and in same-sex relationships are often left out of the conversation. This exclusion can result in inequality of access to information and support.

TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY COMMUNITY

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

- transgender 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)

Menopause symptoms can be experienced by transgender and non-binary colleagues due to changes in hormones which can fluctuate as treatments often stop and start again. It is important to realise that medical transition can take up to seven years. However, not every transgender or non-binary individual takes hormones, but they can still experience the menopause.

Transgender, and non-binary people face additional challenges in the form of discrimination and lack of inclusivity. Many members of the community have had poor healthcare experiences and are therefore reluctant to seek help. Menopause support must be inclusive so that everyone can be seen and heard and get the help they need. For example, a transgender man may become highly anxious as menopause symptoms may be a constant reminder that he was born in the wrong body. Additionally, if a transgender man has had surgery to remove his ovaries and uterus, they may experience a premature menopause.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD CONSIDER THAT:

- not all transgender, those with VSD or non-binary people take hormones, but those who do can experience menopause symptoms when stopping or restarting treatment
- transgender men might experience menopause symptoms if their ovaries remain and they're not given hormone therapy
- transgender men and intersex women might experience surgical menopause if their ovaries are removed
- transgender men and intersex women might not experience menopause symptoms with hormone therapy, but they may experience hormonal disruption
- transgender women and intersex women might experience some of the symptoms related to the menopause if their hormone therapy treatment is interrupted or hormone levels change

BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Media portrayal of the menopause tends to feature white women and this plays into the false narrative that black and minority women are not affected by the menopause. Research shows that black women start the menopause up to two years earlier than white women, and experience worse symptoms for a longer time. Karen Arthur, of Menopause Whilst Black podcast adds that for black women "There's something about not showing weakness. Not slowing down or stopping. Being the shoulder that everybody cries on, and the person who fixes everything."

There are also cultural issues to be aware of, for example, in some Asian communities there is no word for menopause, and it is rarely talked about in the older generation leading to lack of knowledge and information. Therefore, it is imperative that information on the menopause and associated support is shared to all staff in a variety of forms in a sensitive manner.

The British Menopause Society have recently published '[Menopause in ethnic minority women](#)', providing more information and research in this area.

PREMATURE OVARIAN INSUFFICIENCY (POI)

Menopause before the age of 40 is called premature menopause or Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI). It can happen naturally or as a side effect of some treatments, such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and surgery. Those who experience premature menopause need a huge amount of support and links to some of these resources can be found at the end of this guidance.

SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS

The menopause can be a source of friction in same sex relationships as symptoms and severity can differ. It is imperative to recognise that people's experiences differ, and to address this when offering support.

Menopause at work: Creating a Menopause Friendly Workplace

Being a menopause friendly employer is not only the right thing to do as a responsible employer but also supports retention of staff, in turn providing a potential cost saving to organisations, and makes organisations a more attractive place to work.

By providing a supportive inclusive workplace with an open culture and reducing the stigma and taboo of menopause through education and awareness, we can better support all colleagues affected by menopause, working to retain our valued employees. Poor employee wellbeing can have a detrimental impact on productivity, absence, employee engagement and overall organisational performance.

Across HIOW we are committed to becoming a Menopause Friendly Workplace, working with HIOW ICB, UHS, HHFT, PHU, SHFT and Solent NHS provider organisations to gain system wide accreditation.

Working through the accreditation standards, we are committed to improving the experience of those going through the menopause

1. Culture
2. Policies and practices
3. Training
4. Communication and engagement
5. Facilities

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Check your Intranet's Menopause page or tile.
Find your local Menopause Advocate here:
hiowpeople.nhs.uk/menopause-advocates
Email us at hiowwellbeing@solent.nhs.uk



Committed to being a
menopause friendly employer



The Law & Menopause

Employers should ensure they have the processes, procedures and support in place to help employees affected by the menopause (ACAS)



Menopause is not a specified protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, however in accordance with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) 'if an employee is disadvantaged and treated less favourably in any way because of their menopause symptom, this could be viewed as discrimination if related to a protected characteristics, for example, age, disability, gender reassignment, sex.'



NHSE Menopause Guidance for Line Managers

More information can be found on the [ACAS website](#)

By law, employers are responsible for the health and safety of their staff, this includes those working from home.

UNDERTAKING A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR STAFF AFFECTED BY THE MENOPAUSE INCLUDES:

- ensuring menopause symptoms are not made worse by their workplace or work practices
- making changes or reasonable adjustments, to help staff manage their symptoms whilst doing their job

A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR MENOPAUSE COULD INCLUDE:

- the temperature and ventilation
- whether there is somewhere suitable to take breaks or rest if needed
- the uniform, including material and fit
- whether there are toilet facilities easily accessible
- whether cold drinking water is available
- whether managers and leads are trained on health and safety issues relating to the menopause

Employers have a duty to consider reasonable workplace adjustments.

Key Legislation:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)



Line Managers & Leaders

'Good menopause care has both direct and indirect impacts on workforce retention, productivity, presenteeism and absenteeism.' (NHSE 2022)

Menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for staff and should be handled with importance and sensitivity. Increased awareness of menopause can help staff remain well and in work, doing their job confidently and effectively.

In addition to the direct impact to the person going through menopause, it can also have an impact on those supporting someone going through the transition for example a partner, relative, colleague or carer. Therefore, although menopause will only be experienced by women and other people who have a menstrual cycle, it is important that everyone, including men are included in the conversation and in training.

Our staff are our biggest asset and as a line manager, you play a vital role in supporting your colleagues at work. It is important to support staff through every stage of menopause to help them remain well, and to retain them in their roles.

We recommend you carry out the [Checklist for Managers](#) in conjunction with local HWB conversation templates or checklists, to guide you through the discussion, ensuring all key points have been considered and addressed.



[CLICK HERE](#) 

Manager Referrals

The Occupational Health team within your organisation can offer professional, impartial, confidential and objective advice to both you and your manager; this may include recommendations regarding work place adjustments. If a member of staff is struggling with peri/menopause symptoms at work, it may be appropriate to refer to OH.

Did you know you can book a

**one-to-one
appointment**

with one of our

MENOPAUSE ADVISERS

Reasonable workplace adjustments

Options will vary depending on a persons' work role, location, colleagues and operational need.

Please refer to your local organisations' Menopause Policy for specific workplace reasonable adjustment guidance.

Often a few simple changes can make a world of difference - enabling someone experiencing menopause symptoms to remain well at work, carrying out their job effectively and contributing to their full potential.

WORKPLACE
REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS
TO HELP STAFF
MANAGE THEIR SYMPTOMS
COULD INCLUDE:

- considering flexible start or finish times
- considering flexible working patterns
- allowing staff to take breaks when they need them
- considering hybrid working or working from home where appropriate
- adjusting certain duties in their role
- providing a private area where they can rest
- allowing them time off if they cannot carry on working that day due to their symptoms
- consider the set up of their work environment, where appropriate for example location of desk and proximity to windows

TOP TIPS

Remember that everyone's menopause journey is different, therefore it is important to treat everyone as individual, something that works for one person may not for another

Keep an open mind and remain objective about what may help the individual

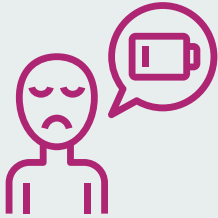
Ensure confidentiality is maintained and ensure regular check in's and reviews take place

Some adjustments may be temporary whilst your colleague finds the most effective way to manage their symptoms

Symptoms can fluctuate, therefore taking a flexible approach with regular check ins with the individual may be best

Reasonable workplace adjustments

SYMPTOMS AND POSSIBLE ADJUSTMENTS



TIREDDNESS/FATIGUE

Consider increased breaks throughout the day or a flexible working pattern



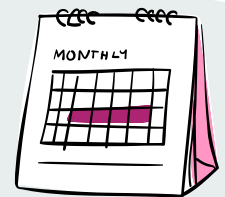
HOT FLUSHES

Considering temperature and lighting to help staff manage their body temperature. Consider uniforms, alternative dress codes, and access to a desk or hand-held fan



DIFFICULTY SLEEPING

Considering flexible working start and finish times could help this



FLUCTUATING OR HEAVY PERIODS

Access to sanitary products, changing /washing facilities to change clothes. Increase in uniforms to assist with multiple changes throughout the day



ANXIETY, PANIC ATTACKS AND CONFIDENCE

Offer regular 1:1's, signpost to EAP service for talking therapy or Occupational Health teams

MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS CAN BE VERY DISTRESSING FOR AN INDIVIDUAL. ABOVE ALL ELSE, UNDERSTANDING AND SENSITIVITY IS LIKELY TO HAVE THE MOST POSITIVE IMPACT ON IMPROVING A PERSON'S CONFIDENCE AND ABILITY TO THRIVE AT WORK.

Tips for having a supportive conversation about menopause

If someone in your team does want to talk with you about their menopause symptoms there are some ways you can prepare for the conversation to help you both get the best out of it.

Some people can find it hard to talk to their line manager about how menopause is affecting them. However, your role as their line manager is to help them be at their best at work and support them to improve their health and wellbeing.

Talking with your team about menopause and the support available within your organisation can be a great way to demonstrate you want to support anyone experiencing symptoms.

It can be hard when you suspect someone is experiencing menopause symptoms, but they haven't talked to you however, do wait for your team member to share what they are experiencing. Bringing it up yourself could be viewed as confrontational or offensive even if meant with the best of intentions. And, as line managers we are not here to diagnose, but to support.

If you observe a team member or colleague struggling or not seeming themselves, ask how they are or if there is anything you can help with. Knowing you care and want to support can provide great reassurance and encourage them to take the conversation further.

Remember that support is available to you as well. You can contact members of your organisations' HR Team to talk through any situation you might be facing with a team member.



DO'S

- Do your research and understand the facts
- Do talk about menopause
- Do follow the guidance in our menopause policy
- Do keep an open mind and be flexible
- Do provide support and focus on solutions
- Do contact the HR Team and refer to Occupational Health if appropriate



DON'TS

- Don't make assumptions about menopause
- Don't shy away from talking about menopause
- Don't share personal information without consent
- Don't address performance issues without checking about health concerns first
- Don't assume that there is a generic menopause experience

DON'T GIVE MEDICAL ADVICE BUT DO
SUGGEST RELEVANT SUPPORT

Tips for having a supportive conversation about menopause



PREPARE FOR THE CONVERSATION

The first step is to make sure you fully understand the correct way to approach and support those experiencing menopause. Review and make sure you are familiar with the suggestions for reasonable adjustments outlined in the policy.



TIME AND LOCATION

Make sure you have the time and space for a confidential discussion that allows the opportunity to raise concerns, worries and discuss next steps and a way forward. Remember it can be difficult for some people to talk about their experiences so not feeling rushed will help put them at ease.



OPENING UP THE CONVERSATION

Focus on the positive. A positive mind-set and approach are essential for line managers to ensure conversations support you and members of your team. Always remember that when a member of your team talks about menopause to communicate that it is not a problem for you or for the organisation.

It is important to remember if you are a line manager that has either experienced menopausal symptoms/has experience via a family member etc that everyone's experiences of menopause are different and your staff member may be struggling differently to your own personal experiences of menopause.



OFFER SUPPORT

Support can come in several different forms. Some employees may just want an empathetic listening ear, while others may want something more formal or may like a 1to1 conversation with the HIOW Menopause Support Service (see page 18 for information)

It is also okay not to have all the answers during your first conversation. You can offer reassurance that you will find answers for your next conversation.



DEVELOP A WORKING PLAN

Menopause is a unique experience and each person may need different support. Ask your team member what they feel might improve their symptoms at work. Remember to review this with them regularly.



KEEP TALKING

At the end of the meeting put a time in the diary to meet again, whether that is to agree a way forward, to monitor progress or to update.

The effects of menopausal transition can change over time, so support may need to change to accommodate this. Reflect on what you are seeing.

Above all, it is in both your best interests to find a good solution. All anyone wants is for your team to be fit and well so they can do their job to the best of their ability, and be happy and well at work

Menopause Training for Line Managers

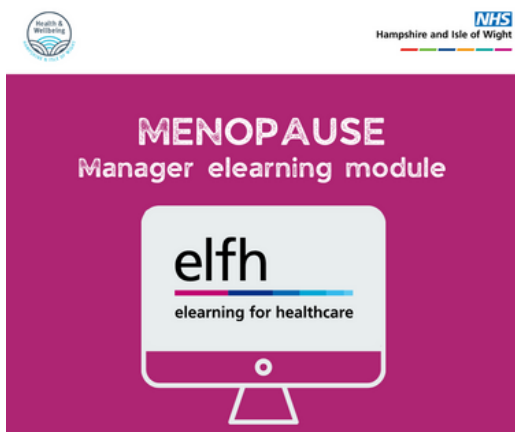
To best support those directly and indirectly affected by menopause, it is important to provide line managers and leaders with the knowledge to build their confidence when supporting colleagues.

The HIOW ICS have teamed up with Henpicked: Menopause in the Workplace, to create a 30 minute eLearning module for line managers across the system.

The 30-minute interactive course covers what you need to know and do to support our colleagues at work. It includes summaries throughout and a test at the end. The module covers:

- Why talking about menopause at work is important
- What menopause is, its symptoms and ways of managing them
- How you can support a colleague at work and what workplace adjustments might look like
- How to talk about menopause at work

How to access training



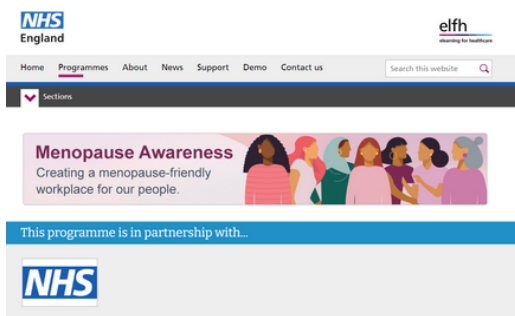
MENOPAUSE LINE MANAGER ELEARNING MODULE

The Menopause Manager eLearning Module can be found within the HIOW Menopause Training Learning HUB catalogue, where you will also find other helpful resources

[HTTPS://LEARNINGHUB.NHS.UK/CATALOGUE/HIOWMENOPAUSETRAINING](https://learninghub.nhs.uk/catalogue/hiowmenopause/training)

*This catalogue is restricted to HIOW Colleagues only - to gain access, please complete this short MS forms to allow the Learning Hub team to grant you access.

[HTTPS://FORMS.OFFICE.COM/E/SST8JCBEKH](https://forms.office.com/E/SST8JCBEKH)



MENOPAUSE AWARENESS ELEARNING MODULE

Did you know you can access general menopause awareness training via eLearning for Healthcare?

[HTTPS://WWW.E-LFH.ORG.UK/PROGRAMMES/MENOPAUSE-AWARENESS/](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/menopause-awareness/)

Further Support & Resources

PLEASE REFER TO YOUR ORGANISATION'S LOCAL POLICIES INCLUDING

- Menopause Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Leave Policy
- Health & Wellbeing Policy
- Managing Attendance Policy

ALL ORGANISATIONS HAVE AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP) OFFER IN PLACE, TO SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR TEAM

Please refer to your local intranet for information on how to access your provider

WE HAVE 50 TRAINED MENOPAUSE ADVOCATES ACROSS THE SYSTEM

Advocates are trained to offer support and guidance, as well as to deliver awareness sessions to teams and line managers To find your local Menopause Advocate please follow this [link](#)

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT PEOPLE PORTAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND HERE:

<https://www.hiowpeople.nhs.uk/>

FURTHER EXTERNAL SOURCES AND READING:

CIPD Guides: Menopause at work: A guide for People Professionals

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/menopause-people-professionals-guidance/>

CIPD Guides: Menopause at work: A guide for people managers

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/menopause-people-manager-guidance/>

NHS England Menopause Guidance for Line Managers (Checklist for Managers Appendix 1a)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/supporting-our-nhs-people-through-menopause-guidance-for-line-managers-and-colleagues/>

Recording Menopause Related Sickness

[ESR Guide](#)

Further Signposting Information for Colleagues

Menopause signs and symptoms

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/>

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) information and support on very early menopause

<https://www.daisynetwork.org.uk>

Information on hysterectomy

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/hysterectomy/>

Henpicked Menopause Hub

<https://henpicked.net/menopause>

Balance App

<https://www.balance-menopause.com/balance-app/>

NICE guidelines on menopause treatment

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>

Women's health concern

<https://www.womenshealthconcern.org/help-andadvice/factsheets/hrt/>

Find a British Menopause Society recognised specialist

Find a BMS-recognised Menopause Specialist - British Menopause Society (thebms.org.uk)

Find a qualified herbalist in your area

<https://nimh.org.uk/find-a-herbalist/>

LGBT+ and the Menopause

<https://menopauseexperts.com/lgbtq-menopause/>

Menopause Whilst Black: Podcast for Black Women going through the Menopause [Menopause Whilst Black](#)

Why we need to openly talk about menopause in South Asian communities

<https://www.britishasianwomensmagazine.com/website/why-we-need-to-openly-talk-about-menopause-in-south-asian-communities>

5 Black and Asian women share their menopause experiences

<https://www.redonline.co.uk/wellbeing/a35934384/black-and-asian-women-menopause/>



MENOPAUSE SUPPORT



VISIT THE PEOPLE PORTAL
FOR MORE DETAILS
WWW.HIOWPEOPLE.NHS.UK

*For NHS and Primary Care colleagues in
Hampshire and Isle of Wight.*



AWARENESS

Self-paced Menopause awareness sessions by MenoHealth. Access them at your convenience on the People Portal



TRAINING

Menopause awareness training for all colleagues, plus additional manager training to support your team



121 SUPPORT

One-to-one appointments with our Menopause Advisors with oversight from a Specialist Menopause Clinician



ADVOCATES

Our trained Menopause Advocates can provide support, signposting, and education to colleagues



FITNESS

Online fitness classes focused on supporting menopause