

Menopause

Workplace Policy



83%

of people employed at the
EA could be affected by
menopause at some stage
in their life



19 000

The number of people who
work for EA who fall within the
age bracket affected by
menopause currently



8%

The percentage of people in
research studies that have
felt the need to leave their
job due to the effects of
menopause



**4-8
years**

The length of time
symptoms can last for



29%

Recent studies have shown that
this is the amount of people going
through the menopause that have
significantly lost their self
confidence at work



20-25%

The amount of people that
research suggests will have hot
flushes which adversely affect their
perceived quality of personal and
working life



Let's talk
Menopause



What is Menopause?

The menopause is part of the natural ageing process for women, it refers to the point in time when menstruation has ceased for twelve consecutive months and a woman has reached the end of her reproductive life.

It usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age, although can happen any time up until a woman's mid 60s or a premature menopause can occur in women before the age of 45.

It is important not to make assumptions as some women can also experience induced menopause due to conditions such as endometriosis or having a hysterectomy.



Why is it a workplace issue?

There are many reasons why it is a workplace issue. EA employs over 26 500 women and around 19 000 of them are of menopause age. As you can see it is vitally important that EA provide an environment where women feel like they can be open about how menopause could be affecting them.

From research across the UK we know that often women can lose confidence as a side effect of the menopause directly impacting their work. Around 8% of those questioned said they had left work due to adverse effects relating to menopause.

We want to ensure our staff feel supported in their workplace and this in turn will benefit performance and absence figures.

Legislation applicable...

Case Law

The first cases in relation to menopause have been won, including the first on disability. Others are on the radar and could be age, gender or even disability discrimination related.

While we do not consider menopause to be a disability in itself – it is a phase in every woman's life – menopause symptoms can give rise to disability under the DDA provided the symptoms have a long-term and substantial adverse effect on normal day-to day-activities.

Through adopting a workforce policy EA can ensure women continue in employment throughout the menopause with their needs taken into account. This should have a positive impact on the levels of absenteeism and confidence for the women in this age group.

Legislation applicable to the policy:

- The **Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978** (Amended 1998) requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Order, employers are required to do risk assessments under the Management Regulations which should include specific risks to menopausal women if they are employed.
- The **Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976** as amended prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of sex.
- **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995** as amended prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of disability. It is also important to note that conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the DDA and require reasonable adjustments.
- **Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006** prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of age.
- **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998** places a duty on EA to consider positive action through paying due regard, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations, EA also have a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination.



How can I Help?

You do not need to be a medical expert. A good level of knowledge on how you can support and being understanding makes a big difference.

Sometimes just being aware that someone may be struggling due to menopause related symptoms is enough, maybe your staff member was always on time and now runs a little late or a staff member who never complained before is starting to feel increasingly overwhelmed. Just like with any situation you would ask if there is anything can be done to help.

There are circumstances where someone may experience severe symptoms and in these situations a reasonable adjustment may be required. [Reasonable adjustments guidelines](#) .

As a line manager having a positive attitude to the menopause, working proactively to make adjustments where necessary and supporting those experiencing the menopause will help ensure the workplace does not unintentionally make symptoms worse.

There may also be some useful materials in the [Game Changing Gateway](#), and on the [Healthwell Hub](#)

We understand that others may experience menopause-type symptoms, while we use the words woman/she/her throughout this document, this support is designed for all our colleagues regardless of their perceived gender.

The policy itself may also help better understand family or friends who are experiencing difficult symptoms due to the menopause.



Line Managers Toolkit Available



What Support does EA have?



The Equality & Diversity Unit can facilitate a buddy with someone who has been through the menopause and can provide a listening ear for someone in the workplace.



The EA Staff Networks are there to provide peer to peer support and are a safe space to discuss issues.



There are menopause clinics for line managers running throughout the life time of the policy, you can find out more about there by visiting the Healthwell Hub.



There is a personal menopause assessment tool on the next page or in the back of the policy. The list of symptoms is not exhaustive but may help in considering what symptoms are affecting them and what they feel may assist them to undertake their role.


NB: They do not need to share this with you as the line manager unless they wish to do so. It may also help you as a line manager to frame questions to assist them if they do seek a meeting and feel comfortable in discussing openly.

**Let's
Talk**



Symptom	Location you have the symptom (if both tick both)		Severity of the symptom				How frequently do you experience the symptom					
	Home	Work	Mild	Moderate	Intense	Severe	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Hourly	Constant
Hot flushes												
Night Sweats												
Irregular Periods												
Mood Swings												
Fatigue												
Hair Loss												
Sleep Disorders												
Difficulty Concentrating												
Memory Lapses												
Dizziness												
Weight Gain												
Incontinence												
Bloating												
Allergies												
Brittle Nails												
Changes in Odour												
Irregular Heartbeat												
Depression												
Anxiety												
Irritability												
Panic Disorder/Attacks												
Breast Pain												
Headache												
Joint Pain												
Burning Tongue												
Electric Shocks												
Digestive Problems												
Gum Problems												
Muscle Tension												
Itchy Skin												
Tingling Extremities												
Osteoporosis												
Other:												

Personal Menopause Assessment



Here is a list of some of the key symptoms that someone may experience during the menopause and which may hinder their ability to fulfil day to day duties.

The list is not exhaustive but may help them consider what symptoms they are suffering and what could assist them in their role.

NB - You may wish to sign post a staff member to this assessment but they may not wish to discuss it openly with you and that is ok.



Personal Menopause Assessment Cont...



Again a staff member may not want to discuss menopause openly but these are some handy questions that can start a conversation if they seem open to a discussion.

Please describe how the menopause affects you? How might your symptoms or the medication you need to take impact on your work? (you don't have to specify what medication you take)

What steps can you take? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them?

Please can you state any triggers that might cause your health problem to affect you at work and any warning signs that your manager or colleagues might notice?

What support or adjustments could be put in place at work to minimise triggers or support you manage your symptoms at work? Is there anything within your daily duty that ideally should be avoided/exacerbate your symptoms?





Further information can be sought from the

EA Equality & Diversity Team

equality.unit@eani.org.uk

028 9090 4213

Remember:



Take the time to make yourself familiar with the menopause policy



Signpost to the [healthwell hub](#) for more health related information



Attend line manager awareness training (available throughout the year)



The personal assessment is there to help and guide



Let staff attend the clinics / workshops (available throughout the year)



You do not need to have all the answers, being supportive is key



In some cases where symptoms are adverse a reasonable adjustment may be required



We have a legislative duty to protect our employees at work