

How to write a menopause policy

QUICK GUIDE



PAM
OH Solutions



Before writing your policy, talk to employees and your occupational health provider about what would specifically help women going through the menopause at your organisation. Also consider setting up a support group and appointing menopause champions who can act as a first point of contact for those impacted. Use accessible language and talk to employees directly, as if you were speaking to them.

Five things to include in your menopause policy

1. Opening statement

This will set the tone for your policy and organisation's overall approach. You could say:

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment for all our staff.

We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that for some the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of the menopause and the impact of the menopause in the workplace, and to encourage open conversations between managers and staff.

We are committed to supporting staff who are affected by the menopause and to providing relevant advice and assistance to anyone who needs it.

2. What is the menopause?

Explain what the menopause is, when it typically occurs, how symptoms can start (long before then) and what the symptoms are. You could say:

Menopause is defined as having occurred when a woman hasn't had a period for over 12 months. It is a natural process that usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, as a women's oestrogen levels drop. The average age for a woman to reach menopause in the UK is 51.

Perimenopause is the time during which your body starts making the transition to menopause. This can begin for some women in their 30s, but most often starts in women aged 40 to 44.

The symptoms of menopause and perimenopause, can last for months or years, and can include:

- Sleeplessness
- Memory loss
- Poor concentration
- Headaches
- Hot flushes
- Muscle and joint pains
- Depression and anxiety
- Mood swings
- Palpitations
- Weight gain
- Dry and itchy skin
- Vaginal dryness and pain
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)

3. Open conversations

Discuss your commitment to making sure all staff are aware of the menopause and supporting those affected. Give examples of how you will do this. For example, you could say:

Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of the menopause, so that they can support those going through it or otherwise affected by it.



We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about the menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace.

Menopause champions will be appointed across the business and contact details made available through the company intranet.

Anyone affected by the menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager, a menopause champion or Human Resources about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause them at work.

Line managers, menopause champions and Human Resources should be ready to have open conversations with staff about the menopause and what support is available. Such conversations should be treated sensitively, and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

4. Risk assessments

Explain your health and safety commitments to staff experiencing menopause. Example wording:

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff, and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those going through the menopause.

5. Support and adjustments

Describe the practical support you will put in place and adjustments you can make to help people stay in work despite menopause symptoms. Some suggested wording is:

While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work.

If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you should contact a menopause champion or the Human Resources Department.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provisions of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working, more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation may also be considered. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We may refer you to our Occupational Health Department or seek medical advice from your GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work.

If you need additional support, you also have access to our confidential employee assistance programme (EAP) which can provide emotional and practical support in confidence.

Need more help to write your menopause policy?

PAM OH can help you to prevent absence and keep people in work by helping you put in place appropriate support services, education and policies. Our menopause support services include:

- ✓ **Policy writing** – professional occupational health policy-writing service to help you create a bespoke menopause policy tailored to the needs of your particular organisation and workplace risks.
- ✓ **Menopause self-assessment** – a free self-assessment questionnaire that women who aren't feeling themselves can complete to see if they are entering into the menopause.
- ✓ **Occupational health assessment** – to identify how the menopause is impacting the individual at work and suggest coping strategies and recommended adjustments to work.
- ✓ **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** – confidential telephone access to mental health counsellors providing emotional support and practice advice on tackling memory issues.
- ✓ **Menopause workshops** – sessions to educate employees about the symptoms of menopause, what to expect and how best to support themselves through the transition.
- ✓ **Manager workshops** – practical sessions to educate managers about the menopause and how it can impact on people at work and their role in signposting towards appropriate support.

Contact us to set up a free consultation to discuss ways of reducing absence due to menopause at your organisation



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