

## Menopause At Work Policy - Information Sheet

The following document aims to provide information regarding the different stages of the menopause and the impact it can have, both on those experiencing the symptoms and those supporting someone through the menopause.

### **Why Do We Need a Menopause At Work Policy?**

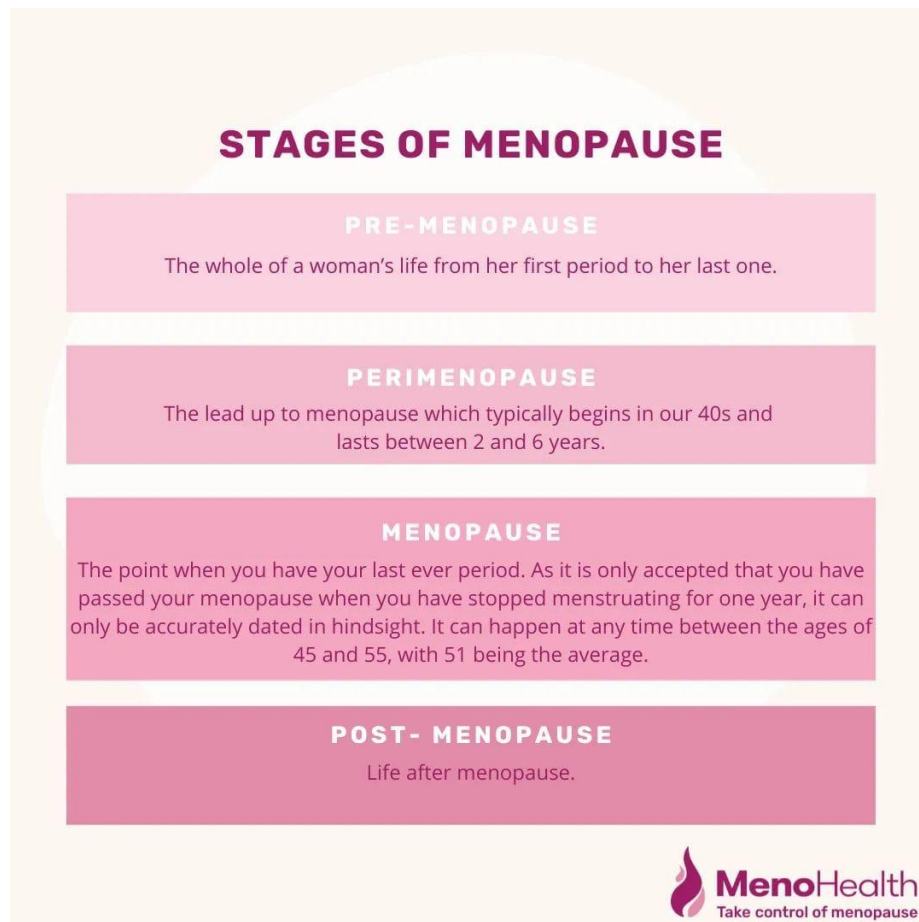
Research compiled by BUPA Health Clinics states that of the 9 million UK women aged between 40-60 years old, 4.5 million of them are over 50 and in the workplace. In 2021 alone approximately 1 million women left a job because of menopause symptoms, exposing UK businesses to the threat of losing their most experienced female talent. For those who don't leave their career due to menopause symptoms, many are forced to take long-term leave, with 32 weeks being the average length of time taken off.

This research is based on those individuals that identify as women/female. It does account for individuals experiencing the menopause who do not identify as female, meaning these figures could be in fact far greater than quoted.

### **What Is the Menopause?**

The menopause is a natural transition stage occurring due to changes in hormones, usually between the ages of 45-55. Although for some individuals, menopause can be experienced earlier than this, due to 'premature menopause' or medical treatment such as surgery; hysterectomy, chemotherapy, aromatase inhibitors (oestrogen suppressants) and treatments for endometriosis.

The following explains the stages of the menopause:



## Potential Symptoms

A wide range of physical and psychological symptoms may be experienced by the individual whilst transitioning through the different stages of menopause. The symptoms can have a significant impact on the individual's comfort and performance at work.

There are a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms that may be experienced whilst transitioning through the different stages of menopause; with the menopause affected individuals in different ways, to differing degrees and over differing time periods. While some individuals may experience a range of potentially debilitating menopausal symptoms, others may experience a few, and some may experience no adverse symptoms at all. Those with disabilities or pre-existing health conditions, may find that the menopause can aggravate existing health conditions or even trigger new ones. Consequently, menopause symptoms can have a significant impact on the individual's comfort and performance at work.

There are 34 commonly recognised symptoms of the menopause, however many health professionals and menopause organisations suggest that actual number far exceeds this and there could be in excess of 50 different symptoms.

Listed below are a few of the more commonly experienced symptoms:

- depression, anxiety and/or panic disorder
- acute lack of confidence
- disturbed sleep/sleeping problems
- fatigue and/or dizziness
- memory loss and/or 'brain fog' (reduced concentration, poor information retention and a reduced ability to learn)
- sudden changes to body temperature, resulting in sweats and flushes, sudden heat or facial redness
- night sweats
- problems with muscles, joints, nerves and bones, leading to muscle pain and weakness, joint pain, osteoporosis / loss of bone density and atrophy
- unexplained mood swings, irritability and emotional outbursts.
- headaches
- weight gain
- incontinence
- anaemia
- bleeding gums, dry mouths or taste changes and strange oral sensations may occur
- the heart and lungs can be affected, causing palpitations and an increased risk of heart disease,
- new/worsened allergies
- irregular periods and/or heavy bleeding
- water retention and bloating
- general skin itchiness and formication (which feels like crawling under the skin), dermatitis or thinning skin

Many of these symptoms can have a serious impact on an individual's performance at work and ability to deal with deadlines and priorities.

It is also important to recognise that consequently, these symptoms can have a negative impact on the partners, families and colleagues of the individual experiencing the menopausal symptoms. As such, **#####'s** Menopause At Work policy is designed to support anyone impacted negatively by the menopause in their everyday, whether they are experiencing the symptoms personally or supporting someone who is.

### **Where can I find more information?**

The following links may provide some useful information, however, any advice given should be used as a guide only:

- [NHS](#) website page dedicated to providing information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- [The British Menopause Society](#) (BMS) educates, informs and guides healthcare professionals on menopause and all aspects of post reproductive health
- [Balance](#) provides unbiased and factual evidence based menopause information to women, and trans and non-binary people
- [BUPA Menopause Support](#) provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- [Menopause matters](#) provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- [Henpicked](#) is an online community that gives women a place to have their say, promote healthy debate and bring about positive change. They also provide 'lunch and learn' videos with industry wide experts
- [The Daisy Network](#) provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency
- [The Menopause Café](#) provides information about events where individuals can meet to eat cake, drink tea/coffee and discuss the menopause
- [MegsMenopause](#) provide honest and frank information on all things menopause
- [Davina McCall: Sex, Myths and the Menopause](#) is Channel 4 documentary where Davina McCall Davina tells her menopause story, busting midlife taboos from sex to hormone treatment after experiencing hot flushes, depression, mental fog 44 and feeling like she was losing it at 44 years of age
- [The Menopause at Work](#) - a practical guide from the CIPD, offers managers guidance on supporting individuals going through the menopause, including how to approach the conversations about it appropriately and sensitively
- [Menopause and Me](#) offers tailored information about all stages of the menopause, understanding the changes to the body and treatment options