



Menopause: a workplace issue

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Why do we need to talk about menopause in the workplace?



- 75% more women over 50 working than 20 years ago
- And working longer
- Around 13m (1 in 3) women in the UK are going through or have reached menopause
- 8/10 women will have noticeable symptoms
- 45% will find their symptoms difficult to deal with
- Pressures can vary depending on the job
- The gender pay gap is widest for women in their 50's (28%)

Definitions

Menopause

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally.

Peri-menopause

Some women experience a few years of 'hormonal chaos' as their oestrogen levels decline, for other women this may go on for longer.

Post-menopause

Post-menopause is a term used when a woman's periods have stopped for 12 consecutive months, however other symptoms may continue.

When does it happen?

- For most women, between ages 45 and 55
- Can be experienced at younger age
- 1 in every 100 women will experience a premature menopause (NHS estimate)

Possible symptoms

- Some women have almost no symptoms, 80% do and 45% find their symptoms difficult to deal with
 - Hot flushes
 - Heavy bleeding
 - Night sweats and sleep deprivation
 - Anxiety, poor concentration, memory problems
 - Urinary problems
 - Migraines
 - Hair loss
 - Osteoporosis

Impact on work

“ If these symptoms were as a result of an illness or disease, more often than not measures would be put in place to support the worker to continue to contribute in the workplace ”

Why menopause is an issue for UNISON

- The majority of our members are women who will experience the menopause
- Menopause issues can cause difficulties at work, even discrimination, yet it's not something we talk about
- It isn't just an issue for women
- It is a workplace issue and therefore a trade union issue

Practical considerations

- Symptoms vary, everyone's experience is different
- Women are little prepared – less prepared about work and the menopause
- Managing symptoms at work?
- Talking to a manager?
- Absences common
- Sympathy is not enough!

What is UNISON's role?

- Finding out what the issues are
- Raising the issues with the employer
- Helping women feel supported
- Encourage more women to become reps
- Train stewards
- Member learning workshops, TUC e-note and Wranx elearning

<https://unionlearn.ulp.wranx.com/>

Menopause Cafes

- A discussion with no preset agenda
- Topics chosen by participants on the day
- An information event, guest speaker, promoting a particular treatment or product is not a Menopause Cafe
- But holding an information talk first, followed by a Menopause Cafe would be ok
- Open to all

Questions/comments?

