

Joint Policy for Cumbria Partnership Foundation Trust & North Cumbria  
University Hospital NHS Trust



## Menopause Policy (Joint)

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# Policy On A Page

## **SUMMARY & AIM**

NCUH and CPFT aim to be menopause friendly organisations.

This policy outlines steps that are being taken to raise awareness of the symptoms of the menopause amongst staff and managers, and support staff who are experiencing this change.

Symptoms and experiences of the menopause are individual.

If a staff member feels they would benefit from further support and/or reasonable adjustments to help during this time, they can request this via their Line Manager.

This can be documented in a Fair Passport, if required. Some staff do not experience many symptoms so may not require any adjustments.

## **KEY REQUIREMENTS**

1. The aim of the policy and supporting guidance is to make managers aware of menopause related issues, and how they can affect their staff.
2. The aim is to create an environment where staff feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms, and ask for reasonable adjustments at work if they wish.
3. The policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for NCUH and CPFT, who are or will, experience the menopause.
4. Staff experiencing symptoms of the menopause can request reasonable adjustments via their line manager, these can be documented in a Fair Passport if required, and reviewed annually.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

- All Staff
- All Managers/supervisors

## **TRAINING:**

- Key staff will be trained as Menopause Champions.
- This policy will be conveyed to all staff as part of induction process, on the health and wellbeing section of the staff website and through health promotion events.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

NCUH and CPFT are committed to ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect in their working environment.

The organisations are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all staff. As employers, NCUH and CPFT have a duty to manage age related issues effectively.

In this regard, NCUH and CPFT will provide appropriate support to staff that are experiencing the menopause. NCUH and CPFT aim to be menopause friendly organisations.

It is important that NCUH and CPFT understands the difficulties and anxieties of staff currently going through this change, and that we manage this issue by raising awareness, training and development, for all leaders and colleagues.

## 2. PURPOSE

The aim of the policy and supporting guidance, is to make managers aware of menopause related issues and how they can affect their staff.

The aim is to create an environment where staff feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms. Some people may not experience many symptoms, but for some, symptoms can be debilitating. If required, staff should be able to ask for adjustments at work to help them to manage the symptoms of the menopause. If needed, these reasonable adjustments can be documented in a Fair Passport, for annual review.

We will take a pro-active stance by promoting a greater understanding of the menopause, and seeking to eradicate any exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

The Menopause Policy and supporting Manager Guidance will provide direction and clarity on how we may deal with menopause related issues for those experiencing symptoms. We also aim to raise awareness of the menopause and symptoms across the organisations.

## 3. POLICY DETAILS

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for NCUH and CPFT who are or will experience the menopause.

### 3.1. Key principles

- Appropriate information/support will be provided to all staff with regards to the menopause. This will be available on the staff website in the form of this Policy, Manager Guidance (See Appendix 1), information and advice and signposting information to support services.
- Increase awareness, ensuring that staff feel supported and comfortable in discussing the menopause in the workplace.

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- Symptoms and experiences of the menopause are individual. Some experience few or no symptoms and require no adjustments or support other than self-help. Whilst others can have symptoms that can debilitate them. A number of women can suffer such debilitating symptoms that it affects their work and the role that they do.
  - If requested, work conditions will be reviewed to take account of the difficulties that some staff experience during the menopause.
  - Reasonable adjustments will be considered for individuals where necessary. These will be discussed at a 1:1 with the member of staff's line manager and reviewed annually. These adjustments can be documented in a Fair Passport if required. Further details on this are available in the Manager Guidance Notes, see Appendix 1.
  - Highlight awareness and training available to all staff.
  - The Fair Passport consists of a form which is completed in agreement with a line manager. It details reasonable adjustments that have been agreed and implemented, usually under the Equality Act 2010 but can be used in other circumstances that require a change in behaviour for a period of time. E.g. staff celebrating Ramadan who are fasting during daylight hours or staff that are experiencing symptoms of the menopause may benefit from completing a Fair Passport.
  - This information is then available in advance should the member of staff change role, location or manager. The aim is to speed up the process and remove the need for further explanation or re-negotiation about reasonable adjustments each time there is a change to a staff members location, role or line manager.

### 3.2 Definitions

**Menopause:**

The menopause is when a woman stops having menstrual periods and is no longer able to get pregnant ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).

**Peri-menopause:**

Is the time that leads to the menopause when many staff may experience symptoms.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.

Around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age. This is known as premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency. ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).

### 3.3 Symptoms

Most people going through the menopause experience symptoms in some form. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on their everyday activities, including work life.

Common symptoms include:

- hot flushes
- palpitations
- headaches
- night sweats
- difficulty sleeping
- skin irritation
- vaginal dryness
- low mood or anxiety
- depression
- reduced sex drive (libido)
- problems with memory and concentration

Surgical and medical treatments, such as a hysterectomy, fertility treatment, endometriosis and hormone therapy as part of someone's gender identity transition can bring about menopause symptoms.

Menopausal symptoms can begin months or even years before periods stop and last around four years after the last period, although some people experience them for much longer and can need medication to alleviate the symptoms.

For further information, please view the information pages on the menopause on the staff website.

### **3.4 How does the menopause impact on staff at work?**

The effects on physical and emotional health can significantly impact on work and relationships with colleagues. In some instances, symptoms may have effects on health, performance and attendance of employees.

With a predominantly female workforce, NCUH and CPFT recognise the organisational responsibility to take into account difficulties staff may experience during the menopause and to provide support and advice in this regard. This can be accessed via the Health and Wellbeing section of the staff website, Menopause Champions and/or Occupational Health and also via the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

If requested, work conditions will be reviewed to take account of the difficulties that some staff experience during the menopause.

## **4. TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

This policy will be conveyed to new employees as part of the induction process and through health promotion events.

Information and Manager Guidance will be available on the Health and Wellbeing section of the staff website.

Awareness raising sessions on the Menopause will be held annually.

## 5. PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE

The process for monitoring compliance with the effectiveness of this policy is as follows:

Aspect being monitored	Monitoring Methodology	Reporting		
		Presented by	Committee	Frequency
What	How	Who	Where	How often
Number of menopause Fair Passport requests	Audit of Fair Passports	OH Lead	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group	Annually

Wherever the above monitoring has identified deficiencies, the following must be in place:

- Action plan
- Progress of action plan monitored by the *Health and Wellbeing Steering Group* minutes
- Risks will be considered for inclusion in the appropriate risk registers

## 6. REFERENCES

NICE (2019). 'NICE guideline [NG23] Menopause: diagnosis and management' [Online] Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>

RCN (2019). 'The Menopause and Work: Guidance for RCN Representatives' [Online] Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-005467>

NHS (2019). Menopause. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

## 7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION:

- Attendance Management policy
- Flexible working policy and procedure
- Managing Stress at Work Policy (Joint)
- Menopause Manager Guidance Notes
- Fair Passport
- Fair Passport Guidance Notes

## 8. DUTIES (ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES):

### 8.1 Chief Executive / Trust Board Responsibilities:

The Chief Executive and Trust Board jointly have overall responsibility for the strategic and operational management of the Trust, including ensuring that Trust policies comply with all legal, statutory and good practice requirements.

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## **8.2 Executive Director Responsibilities: Executive Director of People and Digital**

All policies have a designated Executive Director and it is their responsibility to be involved in the development and sign off of the policies, this should ensure that Trust policies meet statutory legislation and guidance where appropriate. They must ensure the policies are kept up to date by the relevant author and approved at the appropriate committee.

## **8.3 Managers Responsibilities:**

Ensure matters are treated sensitively and confidentially.

- Promote awareness of policy to staff.
- To increase personal awareness of symptoms of the menopause and possible effects on health, performance and attendance of employees
- Ensure health, safety and welfare of employees with whom they come into contact
- To provide support and assistance, to a reasonable extent, to staff experiencing symptoms of the menopause
- Ensure staff are aware of the support that can be accessed and reasonable adjustments that can be made
- To access support and advice where required from Menopause Champions and/or Occupational Health.

## **8.4 Staff Responsibilities:**

To seek early support if required.

## **8.5 HR and Occupational Health Responsibilities:**

- Providing advice and assistance to staff and managers on the policy.

## **8.6 Trade Union Responsibilities**

- Encourage members to seek help voluntarily and early
- Advise members of their rights, and responsibilities, under this policy
- Members of Unison have also been trained as Menopause Champions. Menopause Champions support all staff who ask for advice on the Menopause or Menopause Policy

## **8.7 Menopause Champions**

Four Trade Union representatives are trained as Menopause Champions.

Menopause Champions:

- promote menopause as an inclusive topic
- act as a point of contact for staff
- directly support female employees experiencing menopause symptoms in the workplace.
- Raise awareness of the Menopause Policy

## **8.8 Approving Committee Responsibilities: Health and Wellbeing Steering Group**

The Approving Committee was the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group. The Chair of the approving committee will ensure the policy approval is documented in the final section of the Checklist for Policy Changes. The committee will agree the approval of the final draft of the policy.

## 9 ABBREVIATIONS / DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
HR	Human Resources
OH	Occupational Health
CFPT	Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
NCUH	North Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

TERM USED	DEFINITION
<b>Menopause:</b>	The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant ( <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a> ).
<b>Peri-menopause:</b>	<p>Is the time that leads to the menopause when many staff may experience symptoms.</p> <p>The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's Oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.</p> <p>Around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age. This is known as premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency. (<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>).</p>

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

<b>Equality Impact Assessment Date</b>	
<b>Sub-Committee &amp; Approval Date</b>	Health and Wellbeing Steering Group 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2019

### History of previous published versions of this document:

Version	Ratified Date	Review Date	Date Published	Disposal Date

### Statement of changes made from previous version

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Version	Date	Section & Description of change
0.1	01/06/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Joint Policy (no previous CPFT or NCUH Policy)</li></ul>
	06/06/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amend to wording from true gender to gender identity transition</li></ul>

**List of Stakeholders who have reviewed the document**

Name	Job Title	Date

**APPENDIX 1: MANAGER GUIDE**

# Menopause: Manager Guide



## **Menopause: Manager Guide**

**This guide is intended to make managers aware of menopause related issues and how they can affect their staff.**

The Menopause Manager Guide provides a framework of guidance on how we may deal with menopause related issues, either for individuals experiencing this natural stage of life condition or those who are perhaps affected indirectly, for example, line managers, partners (including same sex partners) and colleagues.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The management guide should be read in conjunction with the Menopause Policy.

The aim is to create an environment where staff feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for adjustments at work. This can be documented in a Fair Passport if requested.

We will take a pro-active stance by promoting a greater understanding of the menopause and seeking to eradicate any exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

#### **What is the menopause?**

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)). The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.

Peri-menopause is the period that leads to the menopause when many women may experience symptoms.

Around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age. This is known as premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency. ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

#### **Symptoms**

Most women will experience menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on their everyday activities including work life.

Common symptoms include:

- hot flushes
- palpitations
- headaches
- night sweats
- difficulty sleeping
- skin irritation
- vaginal dryness
- low mood or anxiety
- depression
- reduced sex drive (libido)
- problems with memory and concentration

Menopausal symptoms can begin months or even years before a woman's period's stop and last around four years after the last period, although some women experience them for much longer and can need medication to alleviate the symptoms.

Surgical and medical treatments, such as a hysterectomy, fertility treatment, endometriosis and hormone therapy as part of someone's gender identity transition can bring about menopause symptoms.

The changes involved in the body can be mild to severe, and in some case the symptoms can be debilitating. Without the appropriate support many colleagues may be left feeling isolated and vulnerable.

There's a time when physiological changes occur before the menopause begins fully - this is known as the Peri-menopause.

Menopause is the time when there have been no menstrual periods 12 consecutive months. Symptoms characteristic of the Peri-menopause are a change in menstrual periods, they may become more heavy and prolonged or irregular.

The changes of the menopause transition (peri-menopause) typically begin several years before the natural menopause. This is a time when the levels of hormones produced by the ovaries fluctuate, leading to irregular menstrual patterns (irregularity in the length of the period, the time between periods, and the level of flow) and hot flushes (a sudden warm feeling with blushing). Other changes associated with the peri-menopause and menopause includes night sweats, mood swings, vaginal dryness, and fluctuations in sexual desire, forgetfulness, trouble sleeping, tearful and fatigue.

Changes in oestrogen levels can result in intermittent symptoms around this time including 'hot flushes', sweating, increased susceptibility to anxiety, migraines, fatigue, stress and sometimes short-term memory problems.

Women can experience both physical and psychological effects of the menopause. The changes involved only happen to women (men don't have a menstrual cycle, however people who have gone through gender identity transition may experience symptoms). Some experience few or no symptoms, whilst others can have symptoms that can debilitate them. Some women can suffer such debilitating symptoms that it affects their work and the role that they do.

The current lack of knowledge on the menopause can mean that someone in the workplace can be misdiagnosed as being someone who is constantly having health issues which may be restricting them from fulfilling their normal everyday duty/role, with time off work. The member of staff might be suffering in silence, afraid to approach anyone for help with symptoms, and as such lose confidence, feel isolated and leave employment.

Recognising these changes can help in making the links between workplace health and safety and the problems some may experience working through the menopause.

Hormonal changes associated with the menopause can affect a women's future health as well as her experience of menopausal symptoms such as osteoporosis and cancer.

## **How is the menopause diagnosed?**

If a woman is over the age of 45 years and has irregular periods and has symptoms of the menopause, there is no need to have a menopause blood test. If a woman is younger than 45 years then it may be beneficial to have a blood test. The blood test measures the follicle stimulating Hormone in the blood known as the FSH. This can confirm if she is going through the menopause.

Surgical and medical treatments, such as a hysterectomy, fertility treatment, endometriosis and hormone therapy as part of someone's gender identity transition can bring about menopause symptoms.

If unsure advice should be sought from a GP.

## **Treatment Options**

Some people do not need any assistance with the Menopause and they can go through this natural stage with no requirement for medical interventions. For those that need it, there are a number of treatment options, these include: Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), Alternative medications like Anti-depressants, natural treatments and changing to a healthier lifestyle can help. It is vital that women are aware of all the different treatments available and if unsure they talk to their GP.

### **Hormone Replacement Therapy**

There are a number of different types of HRT that can be prescribed. HRT is known to be the most effective treatment for those suffering with symptoms of the menopause. HRT replaces the oestrogen that your body no longer produces after the menopause and can be taken in many forms such as tablets, gel, or patches.

### **Alternative Medications**

Anti-depressants or other medications can be given sometimes to help ease some of the symptoms such as depression, headaches.

### **Natural Treatments**

There are a number of natural products available in chemists, supermarkets, pharmacies.

### **Healthier Lifestyle**

Eating a balanced diet, exercise, stopping smoking and stopping drinking alcohol can all benefit your body and improve your symptoms during this time. Lack of sleep, stress, unhealthy eating and unhealthy lifestyle can increase the symptoms of menopause. Information and advice on the above can be found on the staff website at <https://staff.cumbria.nhs.uk/staff/health-wellbeing>

### **Self-help Alternatives**

Such as strategies for managing stress, mindfulness and relaxation techniques, going for a short walk whilst at work may also help.

## **How to support women going through the Menopause**

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Managers to consider the following although this list is not exhaustive:-

**Line managers to be supportive** and be aware of the menopausal symptoms, so that women don't feel embarrassed to approach him/her and discuss how the menopause is affecting their health. Menopause can affect people's confidence and it can be extremely daunting and embarrassing talking to someone who has no idea about the menopause.

It is good practice to ask all employees about any health conditions that they may have or be experiencing. This could be undertaken as part of regular one to one meetings.

**Seek advice from Menopause Champion** that is available for managers or people that are currently struggling and need advice and support. The Menopause Champions are part of the Menopause Working Group and comprises member's representatives of Trade Unions and Occupational Health. Members of the Menopause Working Group can signpost people to the appropriate support and information available. Up-to-date contact details are available on the staff website.

**Reasonable adjustments**— reasonable adjustments may need to be considered and, if required, implemented accordingly for women currently going through the menopause and experiencing symptoms. Some staff will not require any adjustments.

The purpose of a reasonable adjustment is removing barriers wherever possible that get in the way of an individual doing their job (e.g. enable women experiencing menopause symptoms to keep doing their job). The adjustment should be tailored to address the barriers/issues experienced specifically by that individual, and should be identified through the discussions with the individual and other relevant experts (where appropriate). It is essential to avoid making assumptions.

Any specific needs that are identified should be recorded and reviewed at least annually, with reasonable adjustments recorded on a Fair Passport if required. It is recommended that this be done at the same time as the annual appraisal, but at a separate meeting. Managers will need to maintain confidentiality in handling health information relating to the menopause.

**The Fair Passport** - The Fair Passport consists of a form which is completed in agreement with a line manager. It details reasonable adjustments have been agreed and implemented, usually under the Equality Act 2010 but can be used in other circumstances that require a change in behaviour for a period of time. E.g. staff celebrating Ramadan who are fasting during daylight hours or staff that are experiencing symptoms of the menopause may benefit from completing a Fair Passport.

This information is then available in advance should the member of staff change role, location or manager. The aim is to speed up the process and remove the need for further explanation or re-negotiation about reasonable adjustments each time there is a change to a staff members location, role or line manager. The Fair Passport belongs to the staff member who keeps a copy. The line manager also keeps a copy and a copy should be forwarded to Occupational Health and/or HR if the Fair Passport is for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Completing a Fair Passport is not compulsory. Staff do not need to have a Fair Passport; they you can request or decline to have one. If they decide not to complete one, however,

they should be aware that your decision will increase the risk that they will have to re-negotiate previously agreed adjustments if they have a change of job or manager. It is best practice even if they do not want to complete a Fair Passport, to keep a list of any adjustments which have been agreed.

More information on the Fair Passport is available in the Occupational Health <https://staff.cumbria.nhs.uk/services/occupational-health> section of the staff website.

**Risk assessment** - managers should consider undertaking a risk assessment for women currently going through the menopause and experiencing symptoms.

### Possible reasonable adjustments

The following table is adapted from guidance developed by the RCN:

Symptom	Examples of potential interface with work	Suggested adjustments
<b>Daytime sweats and flushes</b>	Less tolerant of workplace temperatures; workwear/ uniform may become uncomfortable; personal protective equipment (PPE), for example, face masks/ visors and lead aprons may be uncomfortable if worn for long periods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure easy access to supply of drinking water.</li> <li>• Ensure easy access to washroom facilities.</li> <li>• Avoid nylon or close-fitting uniforms.</li> <li>• Look at ways to cool the working environment for staff affected, for example fans at workstations; move desks to near windows/open windows and adjust air conditioning.</li> <li>• Limit the time wearing PPE.</li> </ul>
<b>Night time sweats and flushes</b>	Fatigue at work due to lack of sleep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support and advice on sleep hygiene via Sleep Zone on the staff website</li> <li>• Consider temporary adjustment of shift patterns to accommodate any difficulties.</li> <li>• Consider flexible working.</li> <li>• Recognise potential need for sickness absence.</li> </ul>
<b>Unable to sleep</b>	Fatigue at work due to lack of sleep (maybe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider temporary adjustment of shift</li> </ul>

	compounded if shift work is carried out).	<p>patterns to accommodate any difficulties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider flexible working.</li> </ul>
<b>Urogenital problems, for example increased frequency, urgency</b>	Need to access toilet facilities more frequently; may need to drink more fluids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure easy access to toilet and washroom facilities.</li> <li>• Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to toilet.</li> <li>• Ensure easy access to supply of drinking water.</li> </ul>
<b>Irregular periods</b>	Need to access toilet and washroom facilities more frequently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure easy access to toilet and washroom facilities.</li> <li>• Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to the toilet.</li> </ul>
<b>Psychological problems, for example: loss of confidence; forgetfulness/ memory loss; difficulty concentrating; change in mood</b>	Certain tasks may become more difficult to carry out temporarily for example learning new skills (may be compounded by lack of sleep and fatigue); performance may be affected; work-related stress may exacerbate these symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage employee to discuss concerns openly at one-to-one meetings with manager or occupational health and negotiate possible adjustments.</li> <li>• Encourage use of counselling services via Validium.</li> <li>• Address work related stress through a stress risk assessment</li> <li>• Consider private area/spaces available for women to rest / recover /make a telephone call to personal or professional support.</li> </ul>
<b>General itchiness and formication</b>	Uniforms may become uncomfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid nylon uniforms.</li> <li>• Comfortable working temperatures.</li> </ul>
<b>Muscular aches and bone and joint pain</b>	Moving and handling or adopting static postures may be more uncomfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make any necessary temporary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules.</li> </ul>

<b>Weight gain</b>	Uniform may become uncomfortable; difficulties with mobility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote physical wellbeing at work, see Health and Wellbeing section of staff website</li> </ul>
<b>Psychosocial and social impact</b>	May feel isolated from work colleagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote physical and mental wellbeing at work – see Health and Wellbeing section of staff website</li> <li>Promote access to counselling via Validium.</li> <li>Provide ability to network with colleagues experiencing similar issues.</li> </ul>

**Flexibility and increased frequency in breaks** - flexibility to take breaks or rest breaks will enable people managing impairments / conditions or pain to contribute more fully in the workplace. A member of staff with medication may want to take it in quiet / private space at specific times to maintain health and wellbeing. Other staff might best be included if they are able to take rest breaks when needed rather than at pre-determined times. Some may just need time to walk around and ease pain in arthritic joints / back pain or to cool down.

Where possible, **facilitate a comfortable working environment** for those suffering menopausal symptoms. This will include adequate drinking water supplies, temperature controlled areas, showers/ washing facilities, adequate access to toilet facilities.

**Access to toilet** facilities: Whilst all workers will need adequate toilet facilities, particular consideration should be given to the privacy available. Women going through menopause may need to change into a new set of clothes and access to toilets/ showers in a job where the employee is not office based, e.g. driving, will be important; some women experience an increased need to urinate and irregular or heavier periods.

Staff going through the menopause may request to be **positioned near a door or window or maybe provided with a desk fan where possible**. Positioning within the office or in an area where they can get a breeze should be considered.

**Temperature, lighting and other factors** can affect the general working environment. Temperature control may be a reasonable adjustment or the provision of a desk fan or heater when temperatures are too hot or too cold that can be controlled by the individual.

**Staff who wear a uniform may request to adjust** or partly remove certain items where possible and may be given access to shower facilities, if available, and be allowed to change their uniform if the need arises during the working day. Those going through

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menopause will need to be able to control their temperature by removing unnecessary layers of clothing.

**Provision of additional uniforms** may be considered to ensure individuals can change during the day. Pro Natural fibres like cotton are preferable to synthetic materials if an employee is experiencing hot flushes and sweating. Uniform made of natural materials may be considered.

**Consideration of flexible working arrangements** for those that are experiencing debilitating symptoms. Menopause symptoms can increase in stressful situations and when the person is tired symptoms can increase. This also enables staff to work productively and manage the impact of their impairments. This may include flexibility for women who need medical treatment or to attend clinics, hospital or appointments and also for those seeking advice relating to the menopause. Managers should consider a phased return to work for staff suffering with severe impairment. This will be particularly beneficial for those who are taking medication for the condition.

Rather than the usual set times including split shifts if the day to day business allows, **later starts, earlier finishing** times. Many staff have a best part of the day when they are able to work most productively on a task. Adjusting a shift to suit that time is a reasonable adjustment. In the case of women going through the Menopause who has trouble sleeping at night a later start may be appropriate.

#### **Other Line Manager considerations:**

##### **Health and Safety Management**

- Does the member of staff have access to information on the menopause?
- Consideration of referral to Occupational Health in relation to the menopause?
- Can women report sickness to a woman manager?

##### **Sanitary and Health Issues**

- Are workstations easily accessible to sanitary and rest facilities?
- Are private washing and changing facilities available?
- Is there access to sanitary products?
- Do rotas and shifts ensure that workers have easy access to sanitary and washing facilities?

##### **Other considerations**

- Is ventilation available and is it regularly maintained?
- Is additional ventilation, for example portable fans, provided if necessary?
- Do uniforms and PPE reflect the needs of menopausal women? (e.g. loose clothing, made of natural fibres)
- Have workstation risk assessments been reviewed to take the menopause into account?
- Are there opportunities to switch to lighter or different duties?
- Do manual handling assessments take these issues into account?
- Is flexibility required in relation to working hours and breaks?
- Is there access to natural light?
- Is time off for medical treatment or advice about the menopause required?

**ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- Staff website, menopause section within health and wellbeing pages:  
<https://staff.cumbria.nhs.uk/staff/health-wellbeing>
- Menopause Friendly Organisation: Information for staff  
<https://staff.cumbria.nhs.uk/services/health-wellbeing/your-health/health-awareness/womens-health/menopause-friendly-organisation>
- Menopause Champions
- Peer support for the menopause via onsite Menopause Cafes.
- <https://thebms.org.uk/>
- <http://www.menopausematters.co.uk>
- Information on the menopause, as well as a variety of related health subjects can be found on the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).
- Henpicked – Wisdom for Women website for women’s health issues.  
[www.henpicked.net](http://www.henpicked.net)
- Dr. Marilyn Glenville PHD is the ULs leading nutritionist specialising in Women’s health
- [www.marilynglenville.com](http://www.marilynglenville.com) (Contains advice on healthy eating and nutrition)