

Menopause Guidance Policy

2022



Menopause Guidance Policy

"At OSiT we believe in workplaces where everyone can thrive, we also believe in the role of employers, employees and businesses in creating thriving communities." – OSiT's Health and Wellbeing Statement from our ESG Policy

As a fully supportive organisation whose workforce is 80% women, it is especially important to recognise biological changes occurring in a woman's life which may impact her physical and mental wellbeing both in their working and home environments, as every single one of your female work colleagues, friends and family will go through menopause.

In a Channel 4 Documentary "Menopause and Me" and "Sex, Mind and the Menopause" with Davina McCall, 4,000 women between the ages of 45 and 55 were surveyed and these are the headline figures

- One in ten women leave their jobs as a result of menopause symptoms
- One in four women will consider leaving their job due to menopause symptoms
- 44% of women say that Menopause affected them doing their job
(this figure equates to 1.4 Million women across the UK)
- 84% of women said there was no one in the workplace that they can turn to
- 52% said they were losing their confidence
- 61% said they lost motivation

The purpose of the Menopause Guidance Policy is to raise awareness to women who may be experiencing changes to our bodies and also to both male and female colleagues who may not be aware of the impact that these physical changes can have on an individual. We hope that this would also extend to helping our clients to help support and recognize these changes that might be impacting their colleagues or friends and families.

Menopause - is when a woman has not had a period for 12 months – the following day is classed as menopause.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to this, which is when a woman may experience symptoms.

Post menopause is the time beyond menopause.

Menopause and Perimenopause can occur as part of a natural aging process, however, these changes can also occur as a result of surgery or as an induced medical procedure and all must be recognized equally. Menopause and perimenopause often evoke negative emotional feelings as well as physical changes. At OSiT we must recognise both the emotional and physical changes that may affect a woman during this process and be able to offer emotional support and where possible access to medical support via our Vitality Private Health Care.

The Menopause transition typically begins between the ages of 45 – 55, but can occur earlier. The full transition typically spans 7 years but can last even longer and up to 14 years.

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Symptoms

As an employer, having knowledge of the range of symptoms a woman might experience could help being able to make recommendations to seek medical advice via a GP or Vitality in the early stages. It has been proven that seeking treatment early in the process can significantly reduce the long term effects. Symptoms can include but not limited to the following:-

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hot flashes | Brain fog |
| Sleep deprivation | Depression |
| Anxiety | Night sweats |
| Low mood | Reduced sex drive |
| Weight gain and slow metabolism | Chills |
| Irritability | Lack of concentration |
| Memory loss | Fatigue |
| Joint Pain | Headaches |
| Bloating | Bad Odour |
| Tingling Extremities | Burning Mouth |
| Digestive Issues | Muscle Aches |
| Brittle Nails | Osteoporosis |
| Irregular Heartbeat | Thinning Hair |
| Disruptive Sleep | Incontinence |
| Dizziness | Panic Disorder |
| Breast soreness | Itchiness |

Someone to talk to

As we have seen, the list of symptoms is exhaustive, some women may experience some of these symptoms while others may experience none. It is however important that women feel that they are able to approach their manager for help and are able to discuss freely how they are feeling both mentally and physically.

OSiT wants to ensure that every employee has someone to talk to, whether it be for her own personal support or support to help them support a family member or friend. OSiT have appointed menopause champions who are a confidential ear and may be able to offer guidance or advise on where to turn for medical advice if needed.

By having an educated workforce you may be able to recognise signs that women are struggling both in the workplace and among friends and family. Our goal is to be open and allow women to feel free to talk openly without fear of being ostracised.

Appointing someone who feels comfortable to talk openly about their own experiences within the workplace will encourage others to have open conversations.

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What we can do

Support may also be needed in the workplace. Women might need flexibility in terms of hours that they work and may also find that they need to take time out from work if symptoms become too extreme. OSiT is committed to supporting women through this time.

Consideration should be given for ways that the physical surroundings could improve symptoms. Consider the temperature of the office, consider positioning a woman closer to air conditioning vents to help with hot flashes. Monitor the office temperature.

The most important thing others can do is to listen, offer genuine support and be understanding that the changes occurring for a menopausal woman no matter how big or small are physical and often not welcomed by the woman.

“ Let's talk about the **M** word ”

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