

Menopause Talking Toolkit



What Is the Menopause?

Medically speaking it is the last menstrual period that a woman experiences. This normally occurs between the ages of 45 to 55 but can occur earlier or later. The menopause is a normal part of ageing and involves changes in the years leading up to the menopause.

What Is the Issue?

According to the Office for National Statistics, menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workplace. A recent independent survey found that over 90% of respondents felt that their menopausal symptoms were having a negative impact on their work. What compounds the issue is that many women are not aware that some of their symptoms are connected to the menopause, and they could be unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems to line managers, because they think they will not understand or act to support them. This means, all too often, that members who are struggling in the workplace with their menopause symptoms don't feel able to seek help.

For these reasons, supporting members experiencing problems at work related to the menopause is a really important workplace health issue and an equality issue.

Talking Toolkit

The Talking Toolkit can be used to help open-up and guide conversations with members about how the menopause is affecting them at work and vice versa. Usdaw hopes the toolkit will help reps better support members working through

the menopause and enable them to make suggestions about workplace adjustments that will help improve their working lives. Usdaw has also produced an advice guide for Usdaw reps *Menopause is a Workplace Issue (Leaflet 454)*, which you might find helpful to read before having the conversation with the member. Available for download here:

www.usdaw.org.uk/454

If a member confides in you that they are struggling with menopause symptoms at work, this Toolkit aims to help you have an open and non-judgemental conversation about whether the workplace might be making their symptoms worse. It focuses on the workplace issues women are experiencing rather than their symptoms, helping members feel more at ease and more likely to inform you of the full extent of their difficulties at work.

After you have finished the conversation, you will have built up a picture of how the workplace is aggravating their symptoms, if at all, and this should help you take the actions forward with the employer and identify possible adjustments that will improve the member's working life and wellbeing.

Please look at the TUC toolkit *The menopause in the workplace - A toolkit for trade unionists*, which addresses workplace issues and has examples of adjustments which can help when you are consulting the employer. You can download it here: www.tuc.org.uk/menopause-work

The talking toolkit can be used to highlight a member's problems with their manager, who has a legal duty to protect the health and safety of their employees at work. This will help ensure they tackle the problem.

Signposting to Further Support

You can provide members with the details the following organisations who offer support and a wide range of information on the menopause:

The Daisy Network

The Daisy Network Premature Menopause Support Group is a registered charity for women who have experienced a premature menopause. It is open to members only, therefore you would have to join by contacting the network at the following address:

The Daisy Network
PO Box 71432
London SW6 9HJ

web: www.daisynetwork.org

Women's Health Concern

Women's Health Concern
Spracklen House
Dukes Place
Marlow
Buckinghamshire SL7 2QH

web: www.womens-health-concern.org

Menopause Matters

Provides up-to-date information on the menopause, online.

web: www.menopausematters.co.uk

References:

The menopause in the workplace A toolkit for trade unionists Wales TUC : www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Menopause%20toolkit%20Eng%20FINAL.pdf
Talking Toolkit For NHS Service Providers in England www.hse.gov.uk/stress/assets/docs/talking-toolkit-nhs-england.pdf
Preventing work-related stress IOSH Inclusive and supportive workplaces needed to help menopausal women, says IOSH | IOSH
Menopause in the workplace | IOSH
Guidance-on-menopause-and-the-workplace.pdf (som.org.uk)
25831.pdf (unison.org.uk)

Q) Does your work pattern/shifts enable you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Does your workstation or checkout make it difficult for you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Does the workplace temperature make it difficult for you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Do the light levels in your workplace make it difficult for you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Does your workload make it difficult for you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Does your uniform or work clothing make it difficult for you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Does the workplace ventilation make it difficult for you to manage your symptoms or make them worse?

Q) Are there adequate toilet facilities and are they readily accessible?

Q) Do you feel that you have reasonable access to drinking water?

Q) Do you struggle with any part of your role or job duties for reasons relating to the menopause?

Q) If you call in sick for reasons relating to the menopause do you feel able to be honest with your manager about the reason for your absence?

Q) Do you feel there is anything about the workplace environment, your working hours or your role that could be adjusted that would help?