Hazards

GREATER MANCHESTER HAZARDS CENTRE

HEALTH & SAFETY 40 YEARS 2021

FACT SHEET

Act Now

on menopause at work

Menopause symptoms can make work harder. Here is what the law says, and what safety reps can ask employers to do.

Menopause is the point when periods stop, and the years before it are called perimenopause. Symptoms can last for years and vary a great deal. Many people do not tell their employer, so a hot classroom, long periods without a break or a lack of privacy can quietly make work much harder.

67%

of working women aged 40 to 60 with symptoms said the effect on their work was mostly negative (CIPD, quoted by the EHRC).

1 in 10

women left a job because of menopause symptoms (CIPD, quoted by the EHRC).

3

parts of the Equality Act can protect someone: disability, age and sex.

Symptoms and what makes them worse

Common symptoms

Hot flushes, poor sleep, tiredness, low mood, anxiety, trouble concentrating, joint aches and heavy or unpredictable periods.

Made worse at work by

Hot or stuffy rooms, no cool place to take a break, poor access to toilets, uniforms, stress and long hours.

What helps

Cooler spaces, flexible hours, breaks when needed, a fan, drinking water, a quiet space and an understanding manager.

What the law says

Menopause is not a protected characteristic by itself. But treating someone worse because of symptoms can be unlawful discrimination because of age, sex or disability.

If symptoms have a long-term and substantial effect on daily life, the employer must make reasonable adjustments. The EHRC published guidance on this in 2024.

It is a health and safety issue too

Employers must assess risks to all workers. Heat, ventilation, long periods of standing and stress can all make symptoms worse.

Menopause also affects trans men, non-binary and intersex people. No one should have to explain themselves in public to get help.

There is no law that requires a menopause policy. That is why safety reps and the union need to ask for one.

Six questions to ask about menopause at work

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THE KEY POINT

No law requires a menopause policy, so the union has to ask for one.

1. **Is there a policy?**
   Agreed with the union and shared with all staff.
2. **Is there someone to talk to?**
   A named person, in confidence, who is not their line manager.
3. **Are rooms comfortable?**
   Cool, ventilated rooms, fans, drinking water and a private place to rest.
4. **Can people get to a toilet?**
   Whenever they need to, even in the middle of a lesson.
5. **Can work be adjusted?**
   Hours, tasks, uniform and breaks, without loss of pay.
6. **Is absence handled fairly?**
   Treated with understanding, and kept apart from sickness triggers.

If you need support

You do not have to tell your manager everything. You can speak to your union rep first and ask them to raise it for you.

Keep a note of how symptoms affect your work and what would help. If you are treated badly, tell your union early. The EHRC and Acas both give advice.

Legal and other standards for prevention and control

- Equality Act 2010: age, sex and disability
- EHRC guidance on menopause in the workplace (2024)
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

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EHRC: menopause at work
equalityhumanrights.com

Acas: menopause at work
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