

Manager's Guidance for supporting an individual

We recognise every person is different and will experience the perimenopause and menopause in a unique way. It is therefore not feasible to set out a structured set of specific guidelines.

If a colleague wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic) or if a male colleague wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- allow adequate time to have the conversation
- find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality
- encourage them to speak openly and honestly
- suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below) and hand out the Advice sheet for peri/menopause
- consult with HR in advance of agreeing any actions/adjustments that fall outside of those that you can accommodate without changing their contractual terms and conditions
- use Record of Confidential Discussion to record the meeting and email a copy to HR, ensure that this record is treated as confidential
- agree if other colleagues should be informed and by whom
- ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow up meeting. Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters e.g. on or off the shop floor or in the staff canteen etc.

Symptom Support

Symptoms can manifest both physically or psychologically, including, but not exhaustively or exclusively:

Hot Flushes

- provide temperature control for their work area, such as a fan or moving closer to a more ventilated area, or away from a heat source
- easy access to drinking water
- be allowed to adapt issued uniform to a summer option all year round
- have access to a rest room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy/irregular periods

- ensure that a form of sanitary provision is always available in the toilets in case of emergencies
- colleagues can bring their own sanitary items and store them within the toilets if necessary
- change of clothes can be left on premises, try to ensure that adequate storage space is available.

Headaches

- ensure drinking water is easily accessible
- offer a quiet space to work, noise reducing headphones may be considered in open offices
- have time out to take medication if needed (this cannot be administered by the business).

Difficulty sleeping

- consult with the HR department on what flexible working arrangements could be considered.

Low Mood

- offer 'time out'
- identify a 'time out space' for the colleague to be able to clear their head
- identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – either in or outside of the work place. HR can provide this through colleague liaison.

Loss of Confidence

- ensure that there are regular personal development discussions with colleagues
- have an open-door policy so that colleagues can discuss any personal issues with you
- ensure that you allocate appropriate time to follow up on a colleague's wellbeing if you have spoken to them.

Need for more frequent trips to the toilet

- understand that colleagues may need toilet breaks more often, and urgently at times.

Poor Concentration / brain fog

- discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and consult with HR on adjusting working pattern/ practise accordingly
- review task allocation and workload
- provide resources for task based lists, action boards or other memory assisting equipment
- offer quiet space to work and noise cancelling headphones in open offices
- reduce interruptions. Shopfloor staff need to be allocated appropriate tasks on/off the shopfloor, if available, where they cannot be disturbed.

Anxiety

Psychological therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can be effective at reducing anxiety. Encourage the staff member to access talking therapies, available at <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/>

There are a list of urgent mental health helplines here: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/helplines-listening-services/>

- identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to or refer to HR for colleague liaison
- allow the colleague time to undertake relaxation techniques or talk to someone to try and alleviate the anxiety, such as take a break and do breathing activities, going for a walk.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP or another clinician. If they have visited their healthcare professional, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to discuss with HR whether a referral for an Occupational Health assessment is required. If they have not seen a healthcare professional about their symptoms, encourage them to do so. There are effective and safe treatments available on the NHS.