



LIVERPOOL  
HOPE  
UNIVERSITY

Est. 1844

# **Guidance for supporting colleagues experiencing the menopause**

## **Introduction**

Liverpool Hope is committed to creating an open and inclusive culture where staff feel supported in the workplace. For people experiencing menopausal symptoms it can be a difficult and stressful time. Everyone will experience the menopause differently and for some symptoms can be quite severe and can affect people both physically and mentally. This guidance document has been designed to help members of staff manage menopause symptoms at work and provide line managers with guidance on how to support and manage staff experiencing menopausal symptoms.

## **Related Policies**

[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

[Flexible Working Policy](#)

[Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#)

[Sickness Absence and Monitoring Policy](#)

[Work Related Stress Policy Statement and Code of Practice](#)

## **Aims**

The aims of this guidance document are:

- To raise awareness and create an environment which promotes open and honest dialogue that ensures staff are comfortable in having conversations about menopause
- Provide appropriate information about menopause to all staff
- Ensure appropriate information is available to all managers so that they can support staff at work experiencing menopause symptoms
- Consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate

Whilst women are predominately referred to in this document, it might not always be obvious who is experiencing menopause symptoms. It's important for managers to remember that the menopause affects most women and other people who have a menstrual cycle. This can include transgender men and women and those who identify as non-binary or intersex.

Managers should support everyone equally and keep conversations confidential and private. This is particularly important because someone might talk about their gender identity when discussing their menopause symptoms and might not want it more widely known.

## **Scope**

This guidance document applies to all University employees and managers.

## Definitions

### Menopause

The menopause is a natural stage of life, which affects around half of the population and usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age but it can also happen earlier or later in someone's life.

### Perimenopause

There is a period of time before the menopause, in the years leading up to it, called the perimenopause where a woman's hormone balance starts to change. During this time a woman may start to suffer with menopause symptoms but is still having periods. Women are said to have reached the menopause when they haven't had a period for a year. The symptoms last on average for four years, but for some can last much longer.

### Post menopause

This is the time after someone has gone through the menopause and from when periods have stopped for longer than 12 consecutive months.

## Symptoms

Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on an individual's daily life, including relationships, social life, family life and work. Most women will experience menopausal symptoms but these can vary from person to person. An individual may have a number of symptoms or none. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on an individual's everyday activities.

Common symptoms include:

- Psychological issues such as changes to mood, like low mood, anxiety, mood swings and low self-esteem, problems with memory or concentration (brain fog)
- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Difficulty sleeping
- Irregular periods
- Palpitations, when your heartbeat suddenly becomes more noticeable
- Headaches and migraines
- Muscle aches and joint pains
- Changed body shape and weight gain
- Skin changes including dry and itchy skin
- Reduced sex drive
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTI's)

## Supporting colleagues experiencing the menopause

The menopause can have a big impact on the daily lives of employees and, in turn have a negative impact on their performance and attendance at work. Some symptoms may last for several years and can include anxiety, reduced concentration, sleep disturbance, hot flushes and heavy periods – all of which can be both physically and emotionally distressing.

It is important to understand that each colleague's situation is unique and their experience and symptoms of the menopause will differ.

We encourage employees to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that the necessary support can be made available. There is further support available within the University, which is detailed later in this guidance document.

The role of the line manager is to create an environment where members of staff feel confident enough to raise issues and have an open and honest dialogue about menopause. A good starting point is having regular one to one meetings. One to one meetings can provide the forum for a conversation about changes to someone's health situation, including the menopause. Asking colleagues how they are on a regular basis will help to create an open culture and encourage someone to raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

It's also important to remember that this is not a one-off event in a colleague's life; symptoms last an average of four years, but for some people can last much longer, so it's important to keep up regular conversations with colleagues. Don't make assumptions – everyone is different, so take your lead from the individual. Symptoms can also fluctuate and be felt to varying degrees.

- Individual conversations with staff should always be confidential and held in private where both the manager and staff member are comfortable and will not be disturbed.
- Listen actively and carefully.
- Encourage them to talk. Ask open-ended questions to allow the staff member to speak freely about their concerns and what support they may need. Give ample opportunity to explain the situation in their own words.
- Encourage the staff member to seek advice and support. Explore whether they have attended their GP and, if not, recommend they take some professional medical advice via their GP. You can also request to refer the staff member to Occupational Health (OH) to seek further guidance and medical advice if required
- Develop an action plan. Often, a few changes to a colleague's work environment can make a big difference, and discussion with a colleague will help to identify what would help. Agree actions and how to implement them,

including setting time to review how the arrangement is working in practice once implemented. Record reasonable adjustments agreed and actions to be implemented by completing the confidential discussion record form [confidential discussion form](#)

- The below link provides some examples of reasonable adjustments which may be helpful for varying symptoms of the menopause [reasonable adjustments considerations](#).
- Ensure confidentiality. Employees need to be reassured of confidentiality. Sensitive information should be shared with as few people as possible and the individual should be asked what they agreed to be shared and with whom. Agree if other employees should/are required to be informed of the reasonable adjustments and who will inform them.

## General Support

Employees are encouraged to speak to their line manager to ensure that all the necessary support can be made available at the earliest opportunity. Below are further details of further general support available within the University.

<b>Line Manager</b>	Staff can speak to their line manager. The line manager is usually the first point of contact to discuss any concerns
<b>HR Manager</b>	Staff can speak to their HR Manager who will provide advice and guidance on the various sources of help available.
<b>Confidential Counselling Service</b>	A confidential self-referral service available to all staff. Leaflets are available from the Personnel Office or on-line at <a href="#">Staff Counselling Leaflet</a> . Further resources are available at <a href="#">Staff Well being</a>
<b>Staff Equality and Diversity Contact</b>	Confidential support on equality matters: Clare Talbot ( <a href="mailto:talbotc@hope.ac.uk">talbotc@hope.ac.uk</a> ) 0151 291 3818 Confidential support on wellbeing matters: Theresa Lewin ( <a href="mailto:lewint@hope.ac.uk">lewint@hope.ac.uk</a> )
<b>Trade Union Representatives</b>	Staff can seek support from their trade union. Recognised unions at Liverpool Hope University are Unison (support staff) and UCU (academic staff)
<b>Chaplaincy Team</b>	The Chaplaincy Team provides pastoral and spiritual support for staff and students from all faiths and none

## **Resources for further help and support**

[Managing the effects of the menopause: Menopause at work - Acas](#)

[NHS - Menopause](#)

[CIPD - Menopause](#)

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information>

[British Menopause Society](#)

[Queer/LGBTQIA+ Menopause](#)

[Henpicked](#)

[Menopause matters](#)

[Daisy Network](#)