

Appendix 2

Practical guidance for employees experiencing menopause symptoms within NHS Fife

GP Advice

Staff should consider seeking medical advice from their GP in the first instance. Staff should not feel that they simply have to 'put up' with menopausal symptoms as a part of life (although there are some people who, because of previous illness cannot be prescribed the usual medication - such as hormone replacement - that can help to diminish menopausal symptoms and will usually have to 'put up' with symptoms). The effects and effectiveness of treatments, including non-medical options, can be discussed with a GP. GPs may also discuss lifestyle and how symptoms can be managed through changes that may help improve individuals longer term health.

Specialist menopause services, which people can self-refer to if they wish, are available in within NHS Fife.

Research

You may wish to learn more about the menopause yourself. Links to more information about the menopause can be found in Appendix 3.

Make a list of your symptoms

Make a list of the symptoms, both physical and mental, you have experienced in the timeframe associated with your periods stopping, noting that not all symptoms are necessarily always as a result of the menopause. Note how you are feeling and any changes that have occurred. If you have an idea about any preferences for treatment, take a note of this before discussing it with your GP. Similarly, if you think of any reasonable adjustments that might support you at work, note this and discuss it with your line manager in the first instance.

Talking to your line manager about the menopause

Ask for a discussion in a location that offers you a level of privacy that you are comfortable with and ensure that enough time is allocated for you to explain your situation.

You may wish to write down any issues you want to raise beforehand. If you do, bring this to the meeting along with any thoughts or suggestions about reasonable

adjustments from your discussion with your GP and/or your own research before the discussion.

If necessary ask for someone to accompany you to help you focus on the issues you need to raise and explain this to your line manager beforehand.

If you would prefer to speak to someone from the Occupational Health & Wellbeing service in the first instance, you can contact them to arrange a 'self-referral' appointment. If you require adjustments to help you improve your experience at work then the Occupational Health & Wellbeing service will most likely have to liaise with your line manager to consider this and a management referral may ultimately be required or suggested.

You can contact the Occupational Health & Wellbeing service via email at: fife-uhb.occhealth@nhs.net or tel: 01592 729401 (or ext 29401)

NICE guidelines

The [NICE Guideline](#) on the diagnosis and management of the menopause can provide further information and guidance on the menopause.

Considering adjustments

The following are examples of what might be considered to be a reasonable adjustment but should not be considered to be adjustments that will be automatically made. Similarly, this list is not exhaustive and other adjustments might be considered. What is reasonable in the circumstances for each member of staff should be discussed and agreed between a staff member and their line manager, with advice from Occupational Health & Wellbeing as necessary.

Examples of adjustments that might be considered to support staff experiencing menopausal symptoms could include the following.

Hot flushes

- Considering some degree of temperature control, such as a desk fan or moving a person to a cooler area of the office or away from a heat source
- Offering easy access to cool drinking water
- Agreeing the need to sometimes move away from a desk to manage a hot flush, allowing a person to go to the coolest point (which may be outside), the toilet or quiet room as necessary
- Ensure that meeting rooms are not occupied beyond the suggested capacity and that 'time out' of a meeting may be required.

Heavy / Light periods

- Supporting access to washroom facilities both when office based and when off site on visits / meetings/ inspections. This may mean preparation in advance to check available facilities
- Consideration of allowing a person to work from home when leaving the house and travelling is not feasible due to heavy periods.

Headaches

- Providing quiet areas and touchdown areas as appropriate
- Considering the provision of noise reducing headphones to wear in open offices
- Allowing time to take medication.

Difficulty sleeping

- Consider flexible working / agile working if necessary /change of work pattern.

Low Mood

- Consider offering a 'buddy' or someone else to talk to
- Consider allowing a person some time to help them refocus on their work
- Support an individual to seek support from their GP
- Offer the Occupational Health – telephone number - tel: 01592 729401 (or ext 29401).

Loss of Confidence

- Offer regular one to one discussions with line managers
- Consider protected time to catch up with work.

Poor Concentration

- Help with establishing if there is a pattern and considering adjustments if concentration is better or worse at certain times of the day
- Review workload with line manager
- Support to make lists of work tasks
- Offer quiet space and try to minimise when others will disrupt staff when they need to concentrate
- Consideration of noise reducing headphones.

Anxiety and panic attacks

- Support an individual to seek support from their GP and consider making use of support services through the Occupational Health Staff Counselling service: tel 01592 729401 (or ext 29401)
- Consider offering a quiet room or space to practice relaxation techniques and mindfulness e.g. Pause Pods
- Consider offering some time out for a person to take a short walk or speak to someone they trust who can help.