

Managing Menopause at Work policy

This policy raises awareness and encourages advocacy in discussing and understanding menopause. It provides detail on what menopause is, its potential impact and how you can be supported in the workplace.

Contents

- [Summary](#)
- [Definitions](#)
- [Supporting you](#)
- [Supporting team leaders](#)
- [Equality assessment and monitoring](#)
- [Further wellbeing support](#)

Policy Owner: BBC HR- Employee Relations and Policy

Summary

We're committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here. Our approach is to raise awareness, encourage advocacy, and provide information for those who are directly or indirectly affected by the menopause. Importantly, this information is relevant to those experiencing menopause, their team leaders, and other colleagues.

It's not contractual and doesn't form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

Who this applies to:

Everyone within the BBC Group

Five key points of this policy

1. We support a respectful and inclusive environment in which you can openly and comfortably have conversations about menopause.
2. We will support you in a way that is appropriate to your needs. Recognising that symptoms related to menopause may occur over several years, can differ from person to person and vary in severity.
3. We will educate and inform team leaders about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can appropriately support their team members.
4. We will explore options to help you maintain a healthy work life balance. Wellbeing support is available through our extensive wellbeing offering.
5. Any personal information that you share with your team leader will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

We recognise menopause affects a substantial proportion of our global working population and can take place at any stage in life either occurring naturally or being induced by medical intervention. In most cases, this happens between 45 and 55

years of age and symptoms can be debilitating and ongoing for years, whenever this occurs.

Menopause is different for everyone. We will support you, as required, whilst you navigate through these changes.

Definitions

There are three distinct stages:

Perimenopause

The time leading up to the end of your periods when changes start to happen, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Menopause

A biological stage in life when you have not had a period for 12 consecutive months. The average age to reach menopause is 51. However, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness, or other reasons. This is known as Premature menopause and in such circumstances, you may not experience perimenopause.

Post-menopause

This is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when those who menstruate have not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

Potential symptoms

Menopausal symptoms vary greatly and can be physical or psychological. It's important to be aware that not everyone going through menopause will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, up to 75% do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe.

Common symptoms can include hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, fatigue, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence.

This is not an exhaustive list of symptoms, and we recommend you seek medical advice or support as soon as you feel able to. More information can be found on [Gateway](#).

Supporting you

Self-management for those experiencing menopause

We each have a personal responsibility for our health. There are several approaches to managing menopause and it's a personal choice on how symptoms are managed.

If you're experiencing menopause, do not suffer in silence. We encourage you to research menopause, discuss it with family or friends and seek medical advice as appropriate.

If your symptoms are causing problems at work, you should speak confidentially to your team leader as early as possible. This is to make sure the symptoms can be treated as an ongoing health issue, rather than unrelated absences. Early notification will also help your team leader work out the most appropriate course of action to support your needs (which may vary over time).

Supporting a colleague during the stages of menopause

We want to make sure that the BBC is creative, inclusive, and full of opportunity for all. We each have a responsibility to understand and support colleagues experiencing menopause.

We want everyone to be confident about their role in supporting colleagues impacted by menopausal symptoms. You can support them by acknowledging the impact, building mutual understanding, and reducing barriers to best support them in their role. This will support colleagues to continue to perform at their best during menopause. For some, they may have workplace changes or adjustments to support and help them thrive at work.

How we behave and speak to each other is important. In upholding our values, we'll treat each other with respect and behave with kindness and sensitivity, understanding and acceptance, keeping an open mind and avoiding making assumptions. It's also important that if a colleague confides in you, you must keep this confidential unless they give you express permission to share it.

Everyone should feel able to raise any concerns with their team leader. Some colleagues may feel more comfortable speaking with a peer or another leader. More information can be found on Gateway.

Supporting team leaders

Team leaders are expected to show awareness and understanding and be a source of information. As such, they should have a supportive conversation with their team member but are not expected to be an expert when discussing menopause. Team leaders should help foster an environment for open discussion without judgement, offering an informal conversation to help support and identify concerns. Expert support is available for team members through our wellbeing resources.

We'll support team leaders through online information, occupational health support and training to make sure they are fully equipped to support their team members if they're experiencing, supporting, or living with someone experiencing any stage of menopause. Team leaders must work with team members to provide relevant and timely support to meet business and personal needs.

Team leaders need to understand that:

- it's essential to maintain confidentiality where requested.
- sensitivity and empathy are important as menopausal experiences differ between individuals, due to lifestyle, age, cultural beliefs, and health conditions.
- not all individuals can articulate their needs or are open and willing to discuss their experiences.
- there is support for individuals and teams on Gateway, including information about what menopause is and how colleague may be impacted.

Reasonable adjustments

Once a Team leader is aware of a team member's symptoms, and the effect these may have on their work, they'll do their best to support and provide options to reduce the impact in the workplace. Experiencing menopause could lead to being considered as having a disability, which is why team leaders can make reasonable adjustments.

Through regular conversations, team leaders can support and make any necessary changes to working patterns or environments. This may mean agreeing on an informal flexible working request as outlined in the Flexible Working policy, seeking an Occupational Health referral or agreeing to not work additional hours for a defined period.

If regular sickness absence is likely, due to menopausal symptoms, team leaders will treat those absences as an ongoing condition requiring the consideration of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in sickness triggers.

Team leaders will consider all requests for support and adjustments sympathetically and will not discriminate against those who are experiencing menopause. They make sure that the required support or adjustments are made promptly.

A team leader may consider:

- options for flexible working (including informal requests, changes to working time, hybrid working)
- alternative duties, temporarily
- undertaking a Risk Assessment with their Safety Adviser
- seeking an Occupational Health referral
- a referral to Access and Disability Services
- options to take breaks within working hours
- time off for medical appointments (in line with Managing Health and Attendance policy)
- changes to the working environment (such as moving a team member's desk or providing a fan)
- Recording absence from work correctly – 'gynaecological'
- Review of absence triggers linked to defined disability/ongoing health condition

Team leaders should agree with the team member how to communicate any reasonable adjustments to their colleagues.

Maintaining confidentiality

A team leader must treat a team member who discloses their health condition with dignity and respect. All requests for support should be considered sensitively and team members should be treated fairly and consistently. Any disclosure will be dealt with under the [People Privacy Notice](#).

Those experiencing menopause mustn't be disadvantaged because of their symptoms. Team members are encouraged to speak to their team leader (or another leader that they are comfortable with) about their symptoms and any issues they may have, especially if this impacts their work.

Any allegation of [discrimination, harassment or victimisation](#) because of menopause will be taken seriously.

Equality assessment and monitoring

The purpose of this equality assessment and monitoring is to identify and consider improvements to make this policy effective. This policy will be reviewed if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law, or practice.

We'll continue to:

- assess the impact of this policy and the effect of menopause in our business and operational activities.
- promote and circulate this policy
- work with partners internally and externally to raise awareness and provide training
- collaborate and include recommendations from colleagues, Unions and staff networks and other key stakeholders
- develop our approach as research into menopause evolves

Further wellbeing support

If you don't want to discuss the issue with your team leader, you can access a confidential service using our [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#). They offer support, expert advice, and specialist counselling. It's free to use and easy to access and is available online or on the telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All BBC employees in the UK have access to the [online GP service](#), a 24/7 service that provides consultation via phone or video call, should you wish to use this service as an alternative to your GP.

Other resources to support you

- [Unmind](#)
- [Peppy](#)
- [Wellbeing of Women](#)

- [NHS guidance on menopause symptoms and treatment](#)
- [NICE guidance on menopause diagnosis and management](#)
- [British Menopause Society](#)
Provides 'education, information and guidance to healthcare professionals specialising in all aspects of post reproductive health'
- [Women's Health Concern](#)
The patient arm of the British Menopause Society
- [Daisy Network](#)
Support for premature menopause or 'premature ovarian insufficiency'
- [Faculty of Occupational Medicine](#)
Provides guidance on the menopause at work
- [Henpicked: Menopause in the Workplace](#)
'Making it easy for you to introduce the right menopause awareness, training, policies and practices'
- [Menopause Café](#)
'Gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause'
- [Talking Menopause](#)
Provides 'seminars, coaching and individually tailored programmes helping organisations transform their culture and create menopause-friendly workplaces'
- [The Menopause Exchange](#)
Provides 'independent advice about the menopause, midlife and post-menopausal health'
- [Menopause Matters](#)
'An independent website providing up-to-date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options'
- [Menopause Support](#)
Provides personal and business support
- [Meg's Menopause](#)
'An open source of information and advice dedicated to empowering women through an honest and frank discussion of all things menopause'
- [My Menopause Centre](#)
An online menopause clinic including a menopause questionnaire that provides a free, personalised assessment with advice on how to take control of menopause symptoms