

5 minute manager's guide: Support and reasonable adjustments

As a line manager you play a key role in supporting your colleagues at work. Often a few simple changes to the working environment can make a world of difference – enabling someone experiencing menopausal symptoms to continue performing and contributing to their full potential.

There are adjustments that might be relatively easy to implement that can help with the more common symptoms that women experience. Colleagues and line managers should discuss and agree these together.

Examples of adjustments that could be made to support those experiencing menopausal symptoms include:

- Providing private areas to rest, recover or make a telephone call to access personal or professional support.
- Ensuring working time arrangements are flexible enough to meet the needs of those experiencing menopause. For example, they may also need more breaks during the day, or may need to leave work suddenly if their symptoms become severe.
- Facilitating a comfortable working environment wherever possible – including adequate drinking water supplies, temperature-controlled areas, and access to toilets and showers or washing facilities.

Symptoms and possible adjustments

Hot flushes:

Taking into account temperature and lighting, to help manage their body temperature. Make desk or hand-held fans easily available. Consider alternatives to dress code or supplementary uniforms.

Difficulty sleeping:

Consider flexible working, as adjusting start and finish times could help here.

Tiredness/fatigue:

Flexibility for breaks, or increased breaks during the day.

Fluctuating or heavy periods:

Changing/washing facilities to change clothes during the working day. Access to sanitary products.

Anxiety, confidence, panic attacks:

Regular one-to-one discussions. Referral counselling services if you have them.

Remember, some of these adjustments may be temporary. It might be a short-term adjustment while your colleague finds the most effective way to manage a particular symptom. Or due to the fluctuating hormone levels the symptom may no longer be as severe.

Top tips

- Keep an open mind and avoid making assumptions about someone's condition or how it may be affecting their ability to do their job.
- Treat every employee as an individual, because menopause symptoms can vary a lot from person to person.
- Keep all meetings confidential and conduct regular reviews.
- Symptoms can fluctuate, so take a flexible approach and check in regularly with the individual.

