



National Audit Office

Menopause and Work

August 2022

What we will discuss

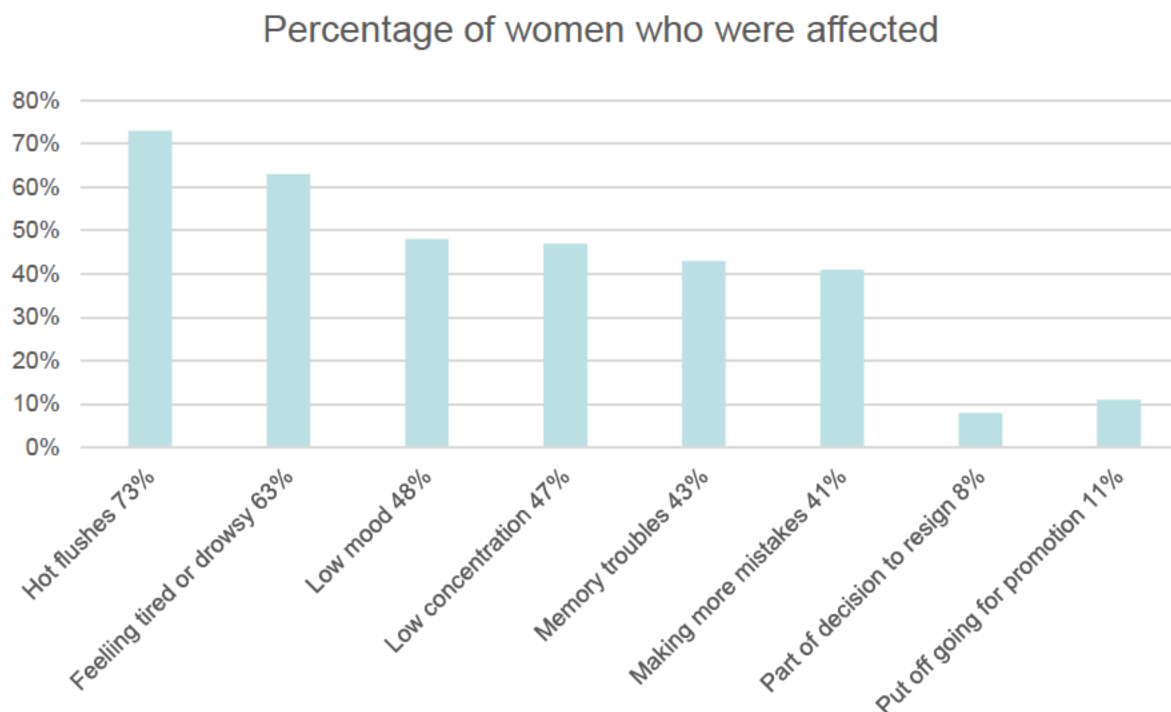
- What is the **menopause**?
- What **effect** can this have on staff?
- How can we **support** staff?
- Additional sources of **support**

What is the menopause?

- **Perimenopause** is the time leading up to menopause when someone may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This stage can last for up to five years or longer.
- **Menopause** is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. This usually occurs when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months. The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.
- **Post menopause** is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months. On average, most symptoms usually last between four to eight years from the last period.

What effect can this have on staff?

Survey by Forth in 2019 – 1000 women aged 45+ surveyed across the UK:



Some Statistics

Over 13 million women in the UK are either peri or post menopausal

1 in 3 women in the UK are experiencing the menopause right now

57 % of the workforce is now female (risen from 51% pre-pandemic).

3.3 million net jobs added to the economy went to women in 2021 as compared to 3.1 to men

1 in 4 women will experience severe debilitating symptoms

Approx. 3.5million women aged 50-65 are in employment

Retirement age is increasing

Menopause is often a silent issue

True or False

Which of these statements are true and which are false?

- ❖ Women on average tend to start menopause in their late 40's and early 50's
- ❖ Menopause lasts for about a year
- ❖ Peri-menopause can start in your 30's
- ❖ Almost 50% of women experiencing the menopause will express feeling depressed
- ❖ Every woman experiences the same symptoms
- ❖ There are lots of ways to manage menopause making it easier to cope with the changes
- ❖ There is nothing employers can do to help someone going through the menopause

True or False Answers

- ❖ Women on average tend to start menopause in their late 40's and early 50's - **TRUE**
- ❖ Menopause lasts for about a year - **FALSE**
- ❖ Peri-menopause can start in your 30's – **TRUE**
- ❖ Almost 50% of women experiencing the menopause will express feeling depressed – **TRUE**
- ❖ Every woman experiences the same symptoms - **FALSE**
- ❖ There are lots of ways to manage menopause making it easier to cope with the changes – **TRUE**
- ❖ There is nothing employers can do to help someone going through the menopause - **FALSE**

Scenario – Not Getting Enough Support

“I struggled with my symptoms for several months before I spoke to my line manager. She had no idea what perimenopause was and had never heard of it. She had no idea of symptoms beyond having hot sweats. I felt as if she didn’t believe me. I had a few problems at work and as a result (of a few things that I had missed!), I mentioned whether she thought Occupational Health or the EAP would be useful. To this she replied that if I can’t do my job, then she thought I probably needed to get some help. It felt like a judgement and knocked my confidence even more. At that point I thought I would probably look for another job, which is a shame.”

Discussion Points

Breakout Exercise - Discuss

- As a performance coach, what could you do in this situation to learn more about peri-menopause before making any decisions?
- Lack of support can affect any employee's ability to do their job. In the case of colleagues managing health conditions, it is important for managers to help get reasonable adjustments in place if required. What help could Occupational Health or EAP be in this situation?
- Any other comments on the scenario?

What can staff do to help themselves?

- Increase their own knowledge about menopause
- Join a support group and discuss their experience and needs with family and close friends
- Discuss support with their Performance Coach/Occupational Health/HR and think about practical needs
- Identify reasonable adjustments that could help
- Consider relaxation mindfulness activities
- Explore and reflect on lifestyle and make changes
- Explore the possibility of medical treatment to help with symptoms (consult with a doctor)

What can the NAO do to support staff?

We encourage conversations between staff and performance coaches to discuss:

- Informal flexible working
- Work adjustments
- Working from home
- Annual leave
- Paid special leave for appointments
- Formal flexible working

What can the NAO do to support staff?

- Cool air
- Booking a desk in a place suitable for your needs (near a toilet, quiet space)
- Additional locker if needed
- Able to take short breaks
- Use of cameras in team meetings

What can the NAO do to support staff?

- Stress Risk Assessment
- Occupational Health referral
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Memory loss and time management
- Support contacts at work
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Coaching

Additional Sources of Support

- Menopause - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- <https://gen-m.com>
- www.balance-app.com
- www.henpicked.net
- www.menopausesuppport.co.uk
- www.menopause-exchange.co.uk
- Menopause Matters, menopausal symptoms, remedies, advice
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Menopause coaching – contact Daniela Corallo in the first instance
- Women's Network and Generations Network – [Diversity networks](#)
- NAO Menopause Guidance – [Menopause Support](#)

*Any questions or areas to
discuss further?*