



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE
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PG 050 Menopause – Managers Guide
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SECTION 1 VERSION CONTROL

Version No.	Date	Post Holder/Author	Post	Reason for Issue
1.0	Dec 2016	Keeley Mansell		New guide

SECTION 2 AIMS / OBJECTIVES

This guide is intended to make managers aware of menopause related issues and how they can affect their staff.

The Menopause Manager's Guide provides a framework of guidance on how we may deal with menopause related issues, either for individuals experiencing this natural stage of life condition or those who are perhaps affected indirectly, for example, line managers, partners (including same sex partners) and colleagues.

SECTION 3 INTRODUCTION

The management guide should be read in conjunction with PS 199 Menopause Policy.

The aim is to create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for adjustments at work.

We will take a pro-active stance by promoting a greater understanding of the menopause and seeking to eradicate any exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

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As an organisation, Nottinghamshire Police is committed to ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect in their working environment.

Nottinghamshire police is also committed to improving the well-being of its people. As an employer Nottinghamshire Police has a duty to manage age related issues effectively.

In this regard, Nottinghamshire Police will provide appropriate support to women who are experiencing the menopause.

It is important that Nottinghamshire Police understands the difficulties and anxieties of police officers and staff currently going through this change and that we manage this issue by raising awareness, training and development for all leaders and colleagues.

SECTION 4 DETAILS

4.1. SCOPE

The policy applies to police officers, police staff, special constables and volunteers working for Nottinghamshire Police.

4.2. KEY PRINCIPLES

- Appropriate information/support will be provided to all police officers and police staff with regards to the menopause
- Work conditions will be reviewed to take account of the difficulties that some women experience during the menopause
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered where necessary
- Increase awareness ensuring that women and men feel supported and comfortable in discussing the menopause in the workplace
- Highlight awareness, training and development for police officers, police staff, police volunteers and management.
- Risk assessments are carried out for every duty/role expected of a police officer or police staff member during the menopause.

4.3 WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE

4.3.1 Definitions

Menopause:

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant.

Peri-menopause:

Is the period that leads to the menopause when many women may experience symptoms.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.

Around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age. This is known as premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.

4.3.2 The Menopause

Menopause is the medical term given to a woman who is in the final stages of a menstrual period. It is often referred to as "the change of life".

This normally occurs between the ages of 45-55 but can occur sooner and continue past the age of 55yrs.

Surgical and medical treatments, such as a hysterectomy, fertility treatment, endometriosis and hormone therapy as part of someone's transition to a true gender can bring about menopause symptoms.

The changes involved in the body can be mild to severe and in some case the symptoms can be debilitating. Without the appropriate support many colleagues may be left feeling isolated and vulnerable.

There's a time when changes occur in a women's life before the menopause begins fully this is known as the Peri-menopause: The time in a woman's life when physiological changes occur that begin the transition to the menopause.

Menopause is the time when there have been no menstrual periods 12 consecutive months. A woman can usually tell if she is experiencing symptoms characteristic of the Peri-menopause because her menstrual periods start changing they can become more heavy and prolonged.

The changes of the menopause transition (peri-menopause) typically begin several years before the natural menopause. This is a time when the levels of hormones produced by the ovaries fluctuate, leading to irregular menstrual patterns (irregularity in the length of the period, the time between periods, and the level of flow) and hot flushes (a sudden warm feeling with blushing). Other changes associated with the peri-menopause and menopause includes night sweats, mood swings, vaginal dryness, and fluctuations in sexual desire, forgetfulness, trouble sleeping, tearful and fatigue.

Women can experience both physical and psychological effects of the menopause. The changes involved only happen to women (men don't have a menstrual cycle). Some experience few or no symptoms, whilst others can have symptoms that can debilitate them. Some women can suffer such debilitating symptoms that it affects their work and the role that they do.

The current lack of knowledge on the menopause can mean that someone in the workplace can be misdiagnosed as being someone who is constantly having health issues which restrict her from fulfilling her normal everyday duty/role, and she might be having time off work. She might be suffering in silence, afraid to approach anyone for help, and as such lose confidence, feel isolated and leave her place of employment.

Recognizing these changes can help in making the links between workplace health and safety and the problems some women experience working through the menopause.

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Changes in oestrogen levels can result in intermittent symptoms around this time including 'hot flushes', sweating, increased susceptibility to anxiety, migraines, fatigue, stress and sometimes short-term memory problems.

Hormonal changes associated with the menopause can affect a woman's future health as well as her experience of menopausal symptoms such as:- osteoporosis, cancer

4.3.3 How is the menopause diagnosed?

If a woman is over the age of 45 years and has irregular periods and has symptoms of the menopause, there is no need to have a menopause blood test. If a woman is younger than 45 years then it may be beneficial to have a blood test. The blood test measures the follicle stimulating hormone in the blood known as the FSH. This can confirm if she is going through the menopause, if unsure advice should be sought from a GP.

4.3.4 Treatment Options

Some women do not need any assistance with the Menopause and they can go through this natural stage with no requirement for medical interventions. For those less fortunate there are a number of treatment options for women, these include:- Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), Alternative medications like Anti-depressants, Natural treatments and changing to a healthier lifestyle can help. It is vital that women are aware of all the different treatments available and if unsure they talk to their GP.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

There are a number of different types of HRT that can be prescribed for women. HRT is known to be the most effective treatment for women suffering with symptoms of the menopause. HRT replaces the oestrogen that your body no longer produces after the menopause and can be taken in many forms such as tablets, gel, or patches.

Alternative Medications

Anti-depressants or other medications can be given sometimes to help ease some of the symptoms such as depression, headaches.

Natural Treatments

There are a number of natural products available in chemists, supermarkets, pharmacies'.

Healthier Lifestyle

Eating a balanced diet, exercise, stopping smoking and stopping drinking alcohol can all benefit your body and improve your symptoms during this time. Lack of sleep, stress, unhealthy eating and unhealthy lifestyle can increase the symptoms of menopause.

Self-help Alternatives such as strategies for managing stress, mindfulness and relaxation techniques, going for a short walk whilst at work may also help.

4.3.5 How to support women going through the Menopause

Supervisors/ line managers to consider the following although this list is not exhaustive:-

Line managers to be supportive and be aware of the menopausal symptoms, so that women don't feel embarrassed to approach him /her and discuss how the menopause is affecting their health. Menopause can affect people's confidence and it can be extremely

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daunting and embarrassing talking to someone who has no idea about the menopause. It is good practice to ask all employees about any health conditions that they may have or be experiencing. This could be undertaken as part of the regular one to one meetings. Any specific needs that are identified (including agreed reasonable adjustments) should be recorded and reviewed at least annually. This could form part of the annual PDR discussion. Managers will need to maintain confidentiality in handling health information relating to the menopause.

Seek advice from Menopause Working Group that is available for managers or people that are currently struggling and need advice and support. The group is supported by officers and staff, including representatives of Trade Unions, Staff Associations, Equality Diversity and Inclusion team and specifically the Forces Women's Support Network - 'Nottinghamshire Encouraging Women to Succeed (NEWS)'. Members of the Menopause Working Group can signpost people to the appropriate support and information available. Eventually in force reps may be used to speak to line managers on someone else's behalf.

Reasonable adjustments – will need to be fully considered and implemented accordingly for women currently going through the menopause and experiencing symptoms. This will include those diagnosed with peri-menopause symptoms, which can affect women from their mid-30's. The purpose of a reasonable adjustment is removing barriers wherever possible that get in the way of an individual doing their job (e.g. enable women experiencing menopause symptoms to keep doing their job). The adjustment should be tailored to address the barriers/issues experienced specifically by that individual, and should be identified through the discussions with the individual and other relevant experts (where appropriate). It is essential to avoid making assumptions.

The following adjustments could be made:

- **Provide private area/spaces available** for women to rest / recover /make a telephone call to personal or professional support. Women going through the menopause may need to manage the impact of the symptoms, a private space to rest temporarily, cry or talk with a colleague before they can return to their workspace.
- **Flexibility and increased frequency in breaks** - flexibility to take breaks or rest breaks will enable people managing impairments / conditions or pain to contribute more fully in the workplace. A member of staff with medication may want to take it in quiet / private space at specific times to maintain health and wellbeing. Other staff might best be included if they are able to take rest breaks when needed rather than at pre-determined times. Some may just need time to walk around and ease pain in arthritic joints / back pain.
- Where possible, **facilitate a comfortable working environment** for those suffering menopausal symptoms. This will include adequate drinking water supplies, temperature controlled areas, showers/ washing facilities, adequate access to toilet facilities.

Access to toilet facilities: Whilst all workers will need adequate toilet facilities, particular consideration should be given to the privacy available. Women going through menopause may need to change into a new set of clothes and access to toilets/ showers in a job where the employee is not office based, e.g. driving, will be important; some women experience an increased need to urinate and irregular or heavier periods.

Staff going through the menopause may request to be **positioned near a door or window or maybe provided with a desk fan where possible**. Positioning within the office or in an area where they can get a breeze should be considered.

Temperature, lighting and other factors can affect the general working environment. Temperature control may be a reasonable adjustment or the provision of a desk fan or heater when temperatures are too hot or too cold that can be controlled by the individual.

- **Officers who wear a uniform may request to adjust** or partly remove certain items where possible and may be given access to shower facilities and be allowed to change their uniform if the need arises during the working day. Permission to not to wear body armour where possible may be considered (subject to risk assessment). Women going through menopause will need to be able to control their temperature by removing unnecessary layers of clothing this will need to be a carefully considered when officers are responding to emergencies etc.
- **Provision of additional uniforms** may be considered to ensure individuals can change during the day. Pro Natural fibres like cotton are preferable to synthetic materials if an employee is experiencing hot flushes and sweating. Uniform made of natural materials may be considered.
- **Support for the Job Related Fitness test** - discussions with Force Fitness Instructor to look at the possibility of 1-1 fitness testing for females experiencing menopausal issues. Confidence can be a barrier and at a time when a female feels low self-esteem or not herself, the task of running in front of male colleagues can be daunting. Consideration for females who are suffering with heavy menstrual bleeding should also be considered. Arranging one to one practice sessions for females may be offered as a suggestion. This would need to be discussed with Learning and Development on an individual basis.
- **Flexible working arrangements** may be considered for those that are experiencing debilitating symptoms. Menopause symptoms can increase in stressful situations and when the person is tired symptoms can increase. This also enables staff to work productively and manage the impact of their impairments. This may include flexibility for women who need medical treatment or to attend clinics, hospital or appointments and also for women and men seeking advice relating to the menopause. Managers should consider a phased return to work for staff suffering with severe impairment. This will be particularly beneficial for those who are taking medication for the condition.

Consideration to be given for flexible working arrangements rather than the usual set times including split shifts if the day to day business allows, later starts, earlier finishing times. Many staff have a best part of the day when they are able to work most productively on a task. Adjusting a shift to suit that time is a reasonable adjustment. In the case of women going through the Menopause who has trouble sleeping at night a later start may be appropriate.

Risk assessment - managers should consider undertaking a risk assessment for women currently going through the menopause and experiencing symptoms. Areas to consider:

Health and Safety Management

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- Does the member of staff have access to information on the menopause?
- Consideration of referral to OHU in relation to the menopause?
- Can women report sickness to a woman manager?

Sanitary and Health Issues

- Are workstations easily accessible to sanitary and rest facilities?
- Are private washing and changing facilities available?
- Is there access to sanitary products?
- Do rotas and shifts ensure that workers have easy access to sanitary and washing facilities?

Other considerations

- Is ventilation available and is it regularly maintained?
- Is additional ventilation, for example portable fans, provided if necessary?
- Do uniforms and PPE reflect the needs of menopausal women? (e.g. loose clothing, made of natural fibres)
- Have workstation risk assessments been reviewed to take the menopause into account?
- Are there opportunities to switch to lighter or different duties?
- Do manual handling assessments take these issues into account?
- Is flexibility required in relation to working hours and breaks?
- Is there access to natural light?
- Is time off for medical treatment or advice about the menopause required?

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Force Intranet well-being page

Menopause Action Group Local and national reps

Henpecked – Wisdom for Women website for women’s health issues. www.henpicked.net

Dr. Marilyn Glenville PHD is the ULs leading nutritionist specializing in Women’s health www.marilynglenville.com (Contains advice on healthy eating and nutrition)

Information on a variety of health subjects can be found on the NHS website www.nhs.uk

SECTION 5 LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

This document complies with police regulations and current employment legislation:-

Section 2 of the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 requires employers to ensure ‘the health and safety and welfare at work’ of all employees

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 place an overriding duty on employers to make workplaces suitable for the individuals who work in them

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require the employer to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks and take action to prevent exposure to risks

The public sector equality duty places a legal obligation on all public bodies to promote gender equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.