

Menopause matters in the workplace

This subject has improved over the years but there are still things that everyone should be putting in place. We'd like to help with that, so let's talk.

Menopause within the workplace is a hot topic and an upcoming legal one, as the article on pages 96-97 of this issue, explains in more detail. However, there still remains a disparity of experiences for employees between organisations, with each organisation having to look at what works for them and their staff.

There is a need for employers to have a comprehensive menopause action plan and *Menopause Matters* founder, Dr Heather Currie MBE and nurse Ruth Devlin of *Let's Talk Menopause* can provide corporate education sessions online or face-to-face to help businesses find the best route to support their personnel.

Heather explained: "We want to bring clarity, confidence and greater understanding about what many employers may see as a complex topic. Our sessions can contribute to helping organisations develop inclusive, supportive and compassionate workplaces."

Ruth added: "All staff bring a range of skills and experience to the work place and, as such, should be valued. When women start going through the menopause they don't lose that experience or those skills, they're experiencing a hormonal imbalance, a transitional stage of life which, remember, they don't choose to go through. By giving them the right support they have a better chance of staying within the workplace and feeling valued and you have more chance of retaining valuable staff.

"Often more experienced staff will show better judgement and knowledge so looking after them makes good business sense. There is a percentage of the population who start experiencing perimenopausal symptoms prematurely in their thirties and forties who still have long careers ahead of them. Providing the right support is invaluable."

A few points for you to consider...

- Women can experience difficulties coping with what was a previously manageable workload due to a multitude of symptoms associated with the menopause.
- Poor memory, low mood, lack of confidence, anxiety, not to mention the embarrassment of having hot flushes and sweats are all very common symptoms so it is understandable how some women in the end feel like they're not coping.
- Women can experience difficulty concentrating which can translate into poor productivity. If adequately supported this can be resolved.
- If women do suffer from significant menopause symptoms it can require time off work – if not adequately supported some women may end up taking early retirement.
- Working in an unsupportive environment can make symptoms worse. Creating an inclusive, supportive workplace culture is essential.
- Many women may be embarrassed to admit having symptoms and don't want to ask for support from management – fear of management targeting them or being ridiculed by co-workers, resulting in days off and poor productivity. Being aware of this and quashing any inappropriate behaviour and language is essential.

Let's look after one another. [MM](#)

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