

# ual:

# Menopause Support and Guidance

PEOPLE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Introduction

UAL is committed to developing a workplace culture that supports individuals working through peri-menopause, menopause and for years afterwards. This fully inclusive guide has been produced to provide information and guidance on menopause for those who are directly or indirectly affected, and menopausal symptoms and how they can affect people in the workplace.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the University's Health and Sickness Absence Policy.

### What is menopause? (Nice guidelines 2019)

Menopause is a natural stage of life, usually occurring between the ages of 45 and 55 as a person's estrogen levels decline and they stop having periods. As menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years, it is best described as a 'transition' rather than a one-off event. The average age for a person to reach menopause, in the UK, is 51. Premature menopause or Premature Ovarian Insufficiency is when a person experiences menopause before the age of 40. Studies show that menopause symptoms can have a significant effect on attendance and performance in the workplace.

### Why is it important to talk about menopause in the workplace?

People over 50 are the fastest growing group in the UK workforce. The [CIPD](#) surveyed 1,409 women experiencing menopause symptoms, led by YouGov.<sup>1</sup>

- Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed (65%) said they were less able to concentrate
- More than half (58%) said they experience more stress
- More than half (52%) said they felt less patient with clients and colleagues
- Almost a million people (up to 2019) have left their employment due to menopause symptoms.

Many people have reported that when taking sick leave due to menopausal symptoms, they feel uncomfortable telling their line manager the real reason for their absence. This can be due to embarrassment, privacy or unsupportive managers.

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<sup>1</sup> Term 'women' used as direct language used by CIPD research

Menopause is a highly personal matter so it is important to foster a culture where the person feels able to have an open, respectful conversation and feel supported. Menopause should not be ignored or a workplace taboo, and line managers should be ready to treat menopause like any other health condition.

Although it is the individual who experience the physical and psychological symptoms of menopause, it is recognised that the menopause can also directly and indirectly affect others both within the workplace and at home. This can include colleagues, family members, people within the LGBTQIA+ community, people transitioning and disabled colleagues. UAL recognise that menopause may also be experienced by colleagues who do not identify as female, so this guidance and support content is intended to support anyone experiencing menopause, regardless of their gender identity.

### **What are the symptoms of menopause?**

People experience different levels of symptoms and some can go through menopause with little impact on their day to day life. But others experience physical and psychological [symptoms](#) that can last for several years.

This [five minute video](#) from Henpicked shares facts and figures that could be helpful for those living with menopause and line managers who are trying to be supportive.

### **Support, advice and treatments**

UAL staff that are experiencing menopausal symptoms and feel that the symptoms are affecting their ability to carry out their role should first speak to their line manager or HR consultant.

Some individuals will find it daunting to discuss the menopause with their line manager and may still be navigating the symptoms themselves. The employee should be given the opportunity to have a confidential, empathetic conversation with their manager to explore what is the right help and support for them.

Depending on the circumstances, an Occupational Health referral may be appropriate to help identify reasonable adjustments that could be put in place to help ease the impact of their symptoms on the individual's work. Managers should

discuss this with their HR Consultant and refer to the Health and Sickness Absence policy. [The CIPD guide to managing menopause at work: guidance for managers](#) is also a great tool and provides examples of how managers can support their staff who are experiencing menopause symptoms.

The CIPD have identified five key areas for line managers to support the health and wellbeing of their staff:

- Being fair, open and consistent
- Handling conflict and people management issues
- Providing knowledge and guidance
- Building and sustaining relationships
- Supporting development

If staff need to talk to someone, they can also contact our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP) provider, for confidential support and advice, 24/7. 365.

Not all people will want or need treatment, but the [NHS](#) provide some top tips that can help with the symptoms of the menopause.

- Regular exercise
- Wearing loose clothing
- Try to reduce stress levels
- Try to avoid possible triggers such as alcohol, spicy food, caffeine and smoking
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet
- Use fans and open windows to cool the body temperature

For advice on medical treatments including [HRT](#) and dealing with mood related symptoms it is important that individuals speak with their GP.

## **UAL Support and resources**

[AskHR](#)

[Dignity at Work Policy](#)

[Health and Sickness Absence Policy](#)

[Menopause support for staff](#)

[Stress- Individual assessment checklist for employee \(Word 45KB\)](#)

## **External related content**

[Coping with the menopause](#)

[Healthline The best menopause blogs of the year 2020](#)

[Henpicked](#)

[Menopause Inclusion Collective](#)

[Menopause Matters](#)

[Menopause and Me](#)

[Menopause Whilst Black](#)

[Queer Menopause Collective](#)