



Tips For Writing Menopause Policy

A valuable guide for HR professionals

Defining Menopause

In this step, it is important to provide a clear **definition** and **explanation** of menopause and its effects on individuals.

Definition



Menopause refers to the permanent end of menstrual cycles in a woman's reproductive years, typically occurring between the ages of 45 and 55. It marks a natural stage in a woman's life where her estrogen levels decrease and she eventually stops having menstrual periods. It's not a sudden event, but rather a gradual transition that can last for several years and cause a range of symptoms.

Explanation



The impact of menopause can vary from person to person and can cause a range of symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes, sleep disturbances, decreased libido, vaginal dryness, joint pain, memory lapses, and headaches. However, it's important to note that everyone's experience with the menopause is unique and can differ in terms of the severity and duration of symptoms.

By including this information in the policy, you can ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of what the menopause is and how it can affect individuals differently.

Relevant Legislation

In this step, it is important to outline the legislative provisions that relate **to health and safety** and **equality** for employees going through menopause and how these laws impact their work.

Health and Safety

Employers have a duty to ensure the health and safety of their employees in the workplace. This includes considering the effects of menopausal symptoms and making any necessary adjustments to accommodate the employee. Some ways this may be done is by:

- Providing access to cooling facilities: Providing access to air conditioning or fans can help to regulate body temperature and reduce discomfort related to hot flashes.
- Encourage breaks and hydration: Encouraging employees to take breaks, hydrate regularly, and maintain a healthy diet can help to reduce the impact of menopausal symptoms on overall health and wellbeing.
- Offer flexible working arrangements where possible - Offering flexible working arrangements, such as flexible hours or the ability to work from home, can help employees manage the symptoms of menopause and improve their overall wellbeing.
- Private workspace - Providing a private workspace with a door that can be closed can provide privacy and comfort for individuals experiencing symptoms such as hot flashes or mood changes.

Equality

Under health and safety law, employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all their workers, irrespective of age. The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination, however the menopause is not a specific protected characteristic under the Equality Act . But if an employee or worker is put at a disadvantage and treated less favourably because of their menopause symptoms, this could be discrimination if related to a protected characteristic, for example: age.

Roles and Responsibilities

In this step, it is important to outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals, managers, and colleagues in relation to the menopause. This can include information on: employees responsibility, managers responsibility and colleagues responsibility. By clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each person involved, a menopause policy can help to ensure that everyone understands what is expected of them and that employees receive the support they need to manage their symptoms effectively.

Employees

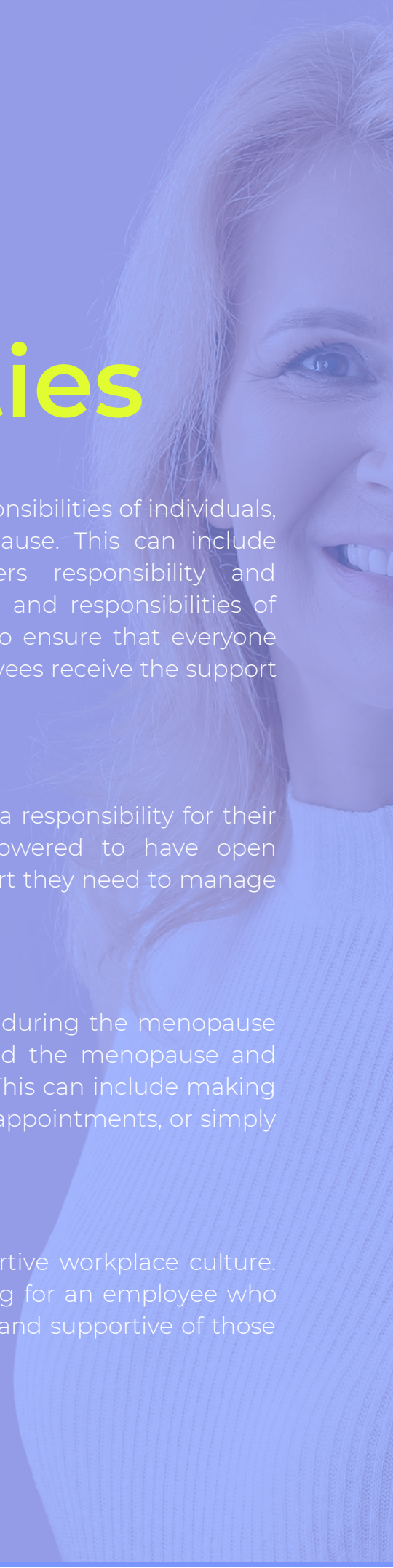
Employees experiencing menopausal symptoms have a responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. They should feel empowered to have open conversations with their line manager about the support they need to manage their symptoms effectively.

Managers

Managers play a critical role in supporting employees during the menopause transition. They should be open to discussions around the menopause and proactively seek out ways to support their employees. This can include making workplace adjustments, providing time off for medical appointments, or simply being a listening ear.

Colleagues

All employees have a role to play in creating a supportive workplace culture. Colleagues can offer practical support, such as covering for an employee who needs to take time off, or simply being understanding and supportive of those who are going through the menopause.



Available Support

It is important to provide details in your policy about the available support in place for employees going through menopause. This may include **workplace adjustments** that can be made to accommodate them.

Outline any **support available** in your company from menopause champions or peer groups, as well as **clear pathways** for employees to access support when needed.

In addition to these resources, it is also important to **encourage self-help practices** such as a healthy diet and exercise regime.

Consider Working Measures

Within your policy you should signpost employees to any variable working measures that you have in place, or may put in place, that may help to accommodate them through menopause. If the role enables, these measures may include increased breaks, time away from the computer, the option to work in other areas of the building, or the ability to temporarily reduce working hours.

If an employee's role cannot accommodate these measures, companies can explore other options such as:

Adjusting the work environment

Employers can make changes to the physical environment of the workplace, such as providing access to cooler rooms, more comfortable seating, and adjusting lighting to accommodate the employee's needs.

Reducing workload

Employers can adjust the workload of the employee or redistribute their responsibilities to others in the team.

Providing additional support

Employers can offer additional support for employees, such as counseling services, wellness programs, or access to healthcare professionals.

Flexible Working Hours

This can help employees manage symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and fatigue.

Time off for medical appointments

Allowing employees to take time off for medical appointments related to their menopausal symptoms can be an effective way to support them during this time.

Points Of Contact

To ensure that employees are aware of the different individuals within the organization they can turn to for support during menopause, companies can incorporate this information into their policies. Here are some steps companies can take:

Appoint menopause and wellbeing champions

Companies can appoint a team of menopause and wellbeing champions who are trained to provide support and guidance to employees. These champions can be a point of contact for employees and can help raise awareness of menopause-related issues.

Provide training for line managers and HR

Companies can provide training to line managers and HR teams to increase their understanding of menopause-related issues and how to support employees. This will help ensure that employees have a range of individuals to approach for support.

Make information easily accessible

Related issues and the support available easily accessible to all employees. This can include publishing articles on the company intranet, sharing leaflets or guides, and hosting webinars or workshops.

Encourage open communication

Companies can create a culture that encourages open communication, where employees feel comfortable discussing menopause-related issues and seeking help when needed. This can be achieved by providing regular updates on the support available and encouraging managers and HR to initiate conversations.

By incorporating this information into their policies, companies can help ensure that employees are aware of the support available and have multiple options for approaching individuals for support. This will help to create a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture for employees going through menopause.



We hope this guide helps to create a baseline for your menopause policy. For more help and guidance visit the link in the caption to access all of our resources.

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