

**1** Menopause and ensuring women's wellbeing is a big issue for the NHS! 46% of our workforce are women aged 45 or over

NHS Ayrshire & Arran is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The menopause is a natural process and for many can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments. However, NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognises that for some the menopause isn't always an easy transition. Some employees may need additional considerations to support and improve their experience at work. Many members of staff will be working through perimenopause and beyond.

**2** Menopause is a natural process that all women will go through at some point in their lives. The menopause is actually the time when a woman has her last menstrual period. The average age for menopause in the UK is 51 but 1 in 100 women experience a premature menopause (before the age of 40). Menopause can be brought on sooner by certain treatments such as surgery to remove the ovaries or chemotherapy. The Peri-menopause is the stage leading up to the menopause when hormone levels start to fluctuate and as a consequence symptoms often start. This stage can last from a few months to several years. There can be many different symptoms (48) and the duration and severity can fluctuate. No two women will have the same experience.

**3** The menopause transition can cause symptoms for many years. The average duration of symptoms is seven years. The severity of symptoms varies and it is estimated that one in five women may experience severe symptoms. The menopause can impact on a woman's physical and mental health but can also have a wider impact on society and the economy. A British Menopause Society survey revealed that 50% of survey participants felt it impacted on their home life, 45% felt that their menopause symptoms had a negative impact on their work, **47% who had needed a day off work due to menopause symptoms said they wouldn't tell their employer the real reason** and 23% of women felt more socially isolated. This survey also revealed that 38% of partners felt helpless when it came to supporting their partner through the menopause.

**4** Menopause can have a significant impact on women at work. **Women of menopausal age are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce.** The potential impact on the workforce is really significant, and thus supporting women during the menopause in the workplace is of paramount importance for any employer to ensure it retains staff who are often the most experienced in the workforce. NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognises this and has launched an evolving programme to raise awareness of menopause related issues and to build on existing staff wellbeing support structures to provide further support for all staff affected by the menopause.

## 7 Minute Briefing Menopause and the workplace



**6** Line managers need to be aware of how menopause can affect their teams. **Creating an open culture in the team** by raising awareness and showing your understanding and support for those affected by menopause can help your colleagues to feel able to approach you for further support. As a line manager you need to be able to perform an individual health and safety risk assessment and have a discussion with your colleague to see what work place adjustments can be considered to help. Often even small changes can significantly help. Training is available through Learnpro module 'Menopause for Managers' and further information can be found in the Menopause Guide on Athena.

**5** **Face to face staff menopause awareness sessions will be available from October. This is being supported by a grant from Staff Wellbeing.** These will be small group sessions (maximum 12) running for a half day covering a wide range of menopause topics with lots of opportunity for further discussions. These sessions will be run by Senior Midwife Donna Brown who has a passion for menopause education and support. These sessions are open to all Health Board staff and can be booked through Learnpro by your line manager. The sessions will be available at University Hospitals Ayr and Crosshouse, Girvan Community Hospital, East Ayrshire Community Hospital and Ayrshire Central Hospital. Informative videos, leaflets and signposting to further support will be available on the Staff Wellbeing Athena page and app.

**7** We would love to hear from you about your experiences and how NHS Ayrshire & Arran can support our staff who may be affected by the menopause.

**Let's get talking about the Menopause.**

Please send any comments or feedback to [abbie.mead@aapct.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:abbie.mead@aapct.scot.nhs.uk).



