

How to talk to your employer

Menopausal symptoms can have a huge impact on your work life. A combination of disturbed sleep, hot flushes and low mood can affect your attendance and performance, and research shows that some women reduce their hours or give up their jobs as a result.

Part of the problem is that you might feel uncomfortable talking about your symptoms [link to symptom checker] with your colleagues or your manager, or you might not know where to go to ask for help or support. Fortunately, some organisations are beginning to take the menopause seriously and already have a menopause policy in place. This is important because women over the age of 50 are the fastest growing group in the UK workforce. As the average age of the menopause is 51, this means that symptoms often occur at the peak of your career.

Starting the conversation

If menopause symptoms are affecting your work, the first step is to talk to your line manager. It can be embarrassing to talk about your menopause, but being honest about your symptoms and asking for help is an important first step. Before you meet, it might help to prepare a list of the symptoms you're experiencing and suggest some practical solutions. If your line manager isn't approachable or sympathetic, consider asking for a meeting with HR, or talking to a different manager who makes you feel more comfortable.

Getting some support

If you work in the UK and your employer doesn't yet have a menopause policy, it's worth taking a look at the Faculty of Occupational Medicine's 2016 Guidance on Menopause in the Workplace ([click to view](#)). This gives practical advice on how to improve work place environments for people who are going through the menopause.

Making changes

If possible, think of a few practical solutions that might help with some of your symptoms – and try to be as specific as possible. If your organisation supports flexible working, a later start might help if you're having trouble sleeping, or you may find that you're more comfortable working from home. Use technology to your advantage by setting reminders or to-do lists on your phone or computer – this can really help if you're forgetful or having trouble concentrating at work.

Build a support network

Consider opening up to your colleagues about your menopausal symptoms so that you have some extra support at work. There may be other people in your team who are menopausal (or have menopausal partners or family members) and understand what you are going through. It's really helpful to have this kind of support if you're having a bad day, and simple gestures like scheduling meetings later in the day or keeping windows open near your desk can make a big difference to your working life.