

How to Write a Menopause Policy

When it comes to writing a menopause policy, you're not alone if you're feeling a little out of your depth. Without the expertise or experience, many businesses worry about doing the wrong thing in regard to menopause.

But if you want to create a great place to work and demonstrate that you care about the wellbeing of all your employees, then it needs to be reflected in your HR policies. A menopause policy at work will help to establish your reputation as a progressive employer.

So, a menopause policy is important for building a positive workplace culture and attracting diverse talent, but do you know where to start?

Remember: a menopause at work policy isn't just for those who might experience menopause—it benefits everyone. This is because it:

- Explains what menopause is and how it affects individuals differently (many people are still unaware of the symptoms, or how severe they can be)
- Clarifies what support is available and how to go about obtaining it (which is useful for managers as well as their line reports).

Some people suffer menopausal symptoms that make life very difficult, and they can struggle at work as a result. In fact, a Channel 4 survey in 2022 found that one in ten women who worked during their menopause quit their jobs because of their symptoms. Your menopause at work policy should therefore state that the support you offer will be based on individual experience.

Below we'll define what a menopause policy is and look at the reasons for drafting one up in a bit more depth.

What is a Menopause Policy?

A menopause policy sets out a company's approach to supporting employees through menopause.

Your menopause at work policy should provide clarity around menopause (what it is, the possible symptoms, how everyone is different etc.), as well as assurance that support is

available and how to request it (pastoral through their line manager and the HR team, and practical through adjustments to ways of working).

Why Have a Menopause Policy?

Despite it being natural, normal, and something that will affect half the population, in many ways, menopause is still a taboo subject—especially in the workplace.

Having a menopause at work policy is a step towards breaking that stigma and encouraging understanding and conversation.

A menopause policy template communicates your commitment as an employer to supporting your employees so that they can keep working through menopause and beyond. Writing one for your business will:

- Show that you're committed to supporting all employees who experience menopause
- Increase awareness around menopause and the different menopausal symptoms
- Help to break the stigma around menopause, and create an open workplace culture where people are encouraged and empowered to talk about it and ask for support
- Communicate the support you'll provide (it might be that you have a hybrid working policy in place), and explain how this will vary from person to person.

Once you have a menopause at work policy template drafted and your policy in place, you also need to ensure you talk about it. Progressive businesses regularly talk about menopause at work and online.

As the employer, you need to open up easy avenues for conversation around menopause and encourage your employees to talk about it whenever they need.

Taking part in **World Menopause Awareness Day** (18th October every year) is another way to raise awareness and publicly acknowledge and support your employees. It also allows you to mention your menopause policy to people outside of the business and catch the attention of future candidates.

Talking about menopause helps to normalise it, and that conversation starts with your menopause policy.

What Should go in a Menopause Policy?

Your menopause policy should be informative, clear and useful. It should:

- Explain what menopause is
- Outline your commitment to supporting your employees
- Educate managers and your wider staff team about symptoms and support
- Tell your employees how to ask for support

Your menopause policy could also:

- Outline any training available for managers
- Link to related policies, like diversity and inclusion, and flexible working

Pro-tip: *It's a good idea to review all of your company policies to ensure they mention and link to your menopause policy wherever applicable.*

If you've never written a menopause policy before, it's difficult to know where to start so you will find a policy template included at the end of this pack.

How Can a Menopause Policy Be Part of Your DE&I Strategy?

As part of your DE&I strategy, a menopause policy will fit snugly in there—its aim is to make sure you don't have people in your workforce who end up leaving because their individual needs and circumstances are not considered.

In this sense, here are the people and elements you should also consider for your menopause policy:

- Trans people and non-binary people should also be part of your policy as you wouldn't want to leave them out, as they also might experience symptoms of menopause. The language you use in the policy should also reflect this.
- Menopause is not just related to a certain demographic and affects people of different ages—this can sometimes be due to early onset menopause or even medical treatments that have an impact on hormonal health.

- People should have access to the comfort they require whilst in their workspace, so these are also details your policy should include.
- Offering mental health support, due to the nature of menopause, could also be an item you think about including in your policy so your team has all the help they need during this challenging time.

Again, remember that your policy should be precise, but also allow for people's symptoms being quite different depending on the person.

Menopause Policy Template

[INSERT COMPANY NAME] recognises that women experiencing the menopause, whether before, during or after this time of hormonal change and associated symptoms, may need additional consideration, support and adjustments.

We recognise that the menopausal symptoms can also affect transgender people including non-binary people.

We are committed to developing a workplace culture that supports workers experiencing the menopause in order for them to feel confident to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments at work.

We recognise that some employees experiencing the menopause may find that related symptoms may impact on their health and wellbeing, and we aim to provide as much support as is reasonably practicable for individuals.

We recognise that the menopause is a very personal experience and therefore different levels, and types of support and adjustments may be needed.

Employees experiencing the menopause are encouraged to let their Line Manager know if they are struggling with symptoms that may impact on their work, so that appropriate support is provided. Such information will be treated confidentially and in accordance with our data protection policy. An alternative contact is available to employees experiencing the menopause should they not feel comfortable discussing their problems with their line manager, (particularly if they are male). This is [INSERT NAME].

Employees who are experiencing the menopause can apply for reasonable adjustments to support them at work, including but not limited to flexible working arrangements, a change in duties, and professional support. We will aim to provide temporary staff cover or redistribute work wherever possible, where there is a lengthy absence related to menopausal symptoms.

Managers will consider all requests for support and adjustments sympathetically and will not discriminate against those employees who are experiencing the menopause and put in place the required support or adjustments in a timely manner. All requests for support or adjustments must be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the data protection policy.

Employees experiencing the menopause are encouraged to seek support through their GP and other external organisations.