



## The menopause: HR guide

### Description

## Introduction

Employers need to understand the **menopause** and the different effects that it can have on women.

With employment rates of women over 50 increasing dramatically in recent decades, it's clear that the **menopause** is an important workplace issue.

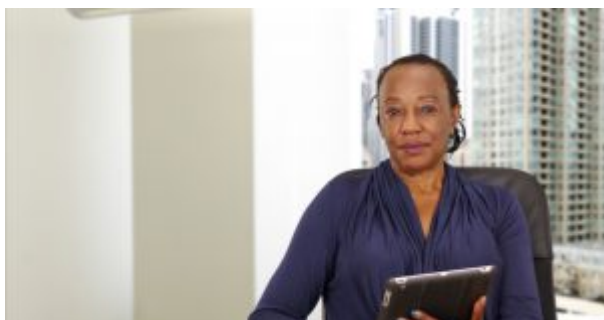
### What is the menopause and its effects?

The **menopause** is defined as when a woman permanently stops having periods.

According to the [NHS website](#), the menopause usually occurs between the age of 45 and 55 and the average age for the **menopause** is 51.

Symptoms could include, for example, hot flushes, difficulties in sleeping, low mood or anxiety and problems with concentration or memory.

About 80% of women experience some symptoms of the **menopause** and 20% of these women experience severe symptoms.

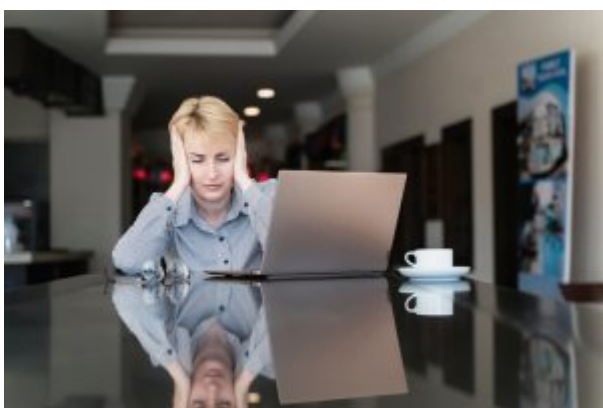


## Disability discrimination

Women who suffer from the symptoms of the **menopause** could in certain cases fall within [disability discrimination](#) protection.

To fall within scope a person would have to have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means that the adverse effect has lasted more than one year or is likely to last more than one year. Normal day-to-day activities could include concentration.

Where a person comes within the definition, an employer must not discriminate which would include having to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.



## Sex discrimination

Where an employer, for instance, fails to take into account the **menopause** on a woman's work performance an employer could potentially be [discriminating against because of sex](#). A key question would be whether the employer would have treated a man suffering from similar symptoms differently.

## Other claims

Women suffering from the **menopause** who are treated badly by their employer could have other claims, such as for [age discrimination](#). A related dismissal could be unfair too.



## Tips

Irrespective of employers' legal obligations, there are good reasons why employers should recognise the **menopause** at work. Taking the issue seriously will help boost productivity and performance and help retain staff. Steps that employers should consider taking include:

- Having a **menopause** policy which is communicated to staff.
- Creating an open environment where women are comfortable about discussing the **menopause** with their line managers.
- Offering an alternative option for discussing concerns.
- Making reasonable adjustments in particular cases such as allowing time off work and changing performance targets.
- Providing occupational health support.
- Offering flexible working.
- Providing fans and cold water.

This guide is intended for guidance only and should not be relied upon for specific advice.

If you need any advice on **the menopause** or other employment law issues please do not hesitate to [contact](#) me on [020 3797 1264](tel:02037971264)

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