Everyone Matters Guide to

Menopause

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Network Rail Menopause Project
What is the Menopause?

• The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant.

• The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.

• Transition or ‘Peri-menopause’ is the period that leads to the menopause when many women may experience symptoms.

• Around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age.

• Often the menopause is brought on early by those who have undergone cancer treatment or surgery for example hysterectomy.
## Some numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximately half (15M) of the UK 32M workers are women, all of whom will experience the menopause to varying degrees.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are currently <strong>3.5 million women workers</strong> over the age of 50 in the UK, which is almost half (45%) of the over-50 workforce.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Although it is rarely discussed at work, the menopause is a natural stage of life that <strong>millions of women workers</strong> are either going through now or will experience in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symptoms can typically last between 4-8 years but can be longer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age.</td>
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</table>
The benefits case for changing the way we think

- Safety and Wellbeing
- Performance
- Talent attraction and retention

Everyone Matters Guide to Menopause
Menopause is a natural life stage for a woman

However:

• Many line managers are male
• Many colleagues are male
• Some colleagues male and female, will have a close family member who may be affected
• Some men do experience similar symptoms as a result of other medical conditions
### Why is menopause Business relevant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the 1900s the average life expectancy was</th>
<th>The average age that a woman experienced menopause was</th>
<th>Today the average life expectancy for women is</th>
<th>The average age that a woman experiences menopause is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the relationship between menopause transition and economic participation, these symptoms can pose a series of difficulties for women in the workplace.
Typical symptoms:
Menopause is a personal experience

• Night sweats
• Menstruation changes
• Weight gain
• Headaches
• Dizziness
• Fatigue
• Palpitations & panic attacks
• Sleep disturbance/insomnia

• Skin irritation
• Mood disturbances
• Anxiety
• Depression
• Poor concentration & cognitive function
• Loss of confidence
• Irritability
• The need for more toilet breaks

..and many more.
Menopause is a personal experience.
A recent Government report (July 2017) has called for more menopause friendly workplaces

- The Government report commissioned by the Equalities office and undertaken by the University of Leicester: “The effects of menopause transition in the workplace”

- The report found that many (78% of respondents) are reluctant to speak up about this gender specific subject at work

- Many women worry about a possible effect upon likelihood of being selected for redundancy, promotion or negative judgements being made about their capability at work.
Menopause importance for Network Rail

• Females represent 17% of our workforce

• NR are committed to active strategies to increase the overall number of women in our organisation: 20 by 20 strategy

• By the 2020s 1 in 3 British workers will be over the age of 50

• Women’s economic participation is important. Attraction, recruitment and retention of Talent will become an increasing business challenge in the UK where fewer will be entering the workforce

• Menopause symptoms often pose a series of difficulties which may require reasonable adjustments in our workplace
Dashboard (October 2018)

17.1% Of Network Rail workforce are females

Network Rail currently employ a total of 6,695 females

36.8% Of all female leavers were aged 40-60 years old
### Total number of female employees by age band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Band</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>3739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women at Network Rail are saying…

“The lack of sleep changes your mood: I became very irritable, very impatient with my colleagues at work and also in my private life”

“I’ve always been considered to have a sharp mind but I felt like I had lost my thinking ability and people would think I was past it”

“Eventually, I told my colleagues in a team meeting that I was going through the menopause. My line manager thanked me as it was a difficult subject for people to talk about and by disclosure I had put everyone at ease”
Women at Network Rail are saying…

“This is difficult to discuss with others at work especially when you have a male boss”

“Hot flushes are difficult to deal with in work as there is limited ability to actually open windows in offices”

“Sanitary challenges were a particular issue sometimes I would have to leave work because I required the toilets more frequently”.

“Some think that they can get “a miracle pill” to stop some of the effects of the changes. Whereas I’ve learned that eating a very balance diet and exercising helps to alleviate some physical symptoms”
Workplace Scenarios: Support for conversations

Beata you've asked me the same question nearly everyday! Do you not understand? Are you struggling to do the tasks I asked for?

Team Lead
Tunde

I keep forgetting! (How do I tell him I can do the job but my memory is so poor at the moment. My brain seems all fuzzy and I just can't concentrate)

Team Organiser
Beata
Workplace Scenarios: Support for conversations

...she's late again for the team meeting 2 months on the trot. If we can all get in for 9 I can't see why she has trouble?

Morning everyone! So sorry I'm late but we can start now. My alarm didn't go off again. (How do I tell them I barely sleep because of the night sweats and getting in for 9 is such a challenge.)
Workplace Scenarios: Support for conversations

I'm not sure what's wrong with Jenny...but she is so moody. It's not even like it's the occasional off day she's the same most of the time. It's just not fair on the team to have to put up with it!

Colleague Jarek

I hate feeling so out of control. I wish I could tell the team it's the menopause affecting my mood. I feel anxious and isolated

Colleague Jenny
Workplace Scenarios: Support for conversations

Kemi is everything ok? You seem to be very flustered lately. Is it because you’re still finding your feet and settling into your new role?

Line Manager Aman

Kemi Thanks for asking… but actually it's nothing to do with work. I need regular access to toilet facilities and I'm getting hot flushes in the office, it's very uncomfortable and embarrassing!

Aman
Temporary Reasonable Adjustments

- Considerations to lighting, ventilation and temperature control (for example provision of USB fan)
- Work space and environment
- Use of flexible and agile working
- Easy access to appropriate toilet facilities
- Suitable changing facilities

- Dress code – consideration to uniform may be a factor e.g. a natural material like cotton is preferable to synthetic materials if an employee is experiencing hot flushes. Additional uniform
- Review of the way their job role is carried out/specific tasks (depending upon the job)
- OH review may be relevant

Discuss don’t prescribe: a woman needs to make her own mind up about what’s right for her
HR Direct can support line managers

- Provide case management: Coach managers to have a conversation mindful that every woman’s experience is different

- Signpost managers and employees:
  - The Network Rail Everyone guide
  - The Network Rail Reasonable Adjustment toolkit
  - Vallidium
  - Occupational Health (where relevant)
Recent Cases

Tiffin vs Chief Constable of Surrey

Merchant vs BT

Ms M Davies vs Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

£19,000 tribunal win for court officer dismissed over medication muddle
Judge allows claim for disability discrimination against woman going through menopause under appeal
Summary

The benefits case for changing the way we think:

- Safety & Wellbeing
- Performance: Great People, great teams
- Talent attraction and retention

At Network rail we wish to create an inclusive environment where everyone can talk about menopause openly

Managers, colleagues and employees can access guidance:

- The Network Rail Everyone guide
- The Network Rail Reasonable Adjustment toolkit
- Validium
- Occupational Health (if relevant)