acas working for everyone
to resolve and prevent
workplace problems

Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter – Share and Learn

Menstrual and Reproductive Health

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Agenda

- Menopause action plans
- Menstrual health
- Upcoming ERA changes
- Supporting colleagues through fertility issues

Key considerations

- Sensitive subject for all involved
- This is not just a women only conversation
- Menstruation is dependent on reproductive anatomy, not gender identity
- Hormonal fluctuations can impact neurodivergent symptoms
- Linked conditions – Endometriosis, Fibroids, Adenomyosis

Fact and figures

1 in 8 of the UK workforce are women over 50 – the fastest growing demographic (39% increase in past decade)

The number of over 65s in the workplace has more than doubled since records were first collected by ONS in May 1992

72.4% (16.76 million) of women aged 16 or over are in the UK are in employment (ONS October 2026)

26% of women going through the menopause didn't request adjustments at work as they were "worried about the reaction of others" (Parliamentary Committee Survey – February 2022)

Legal Considerations

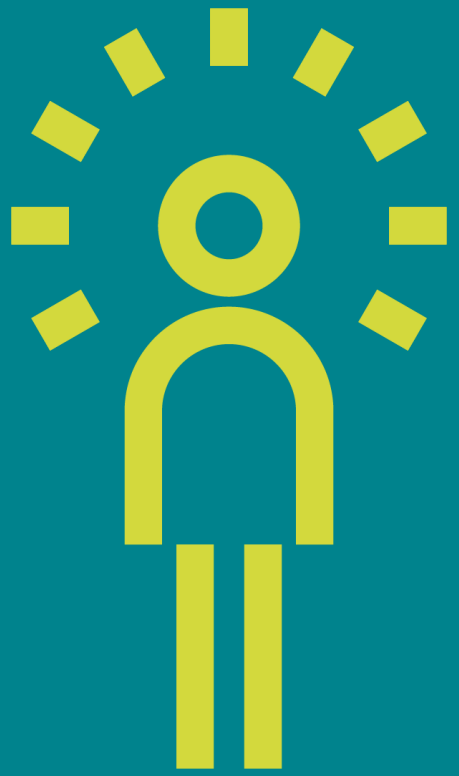
- **The Equality Act 2010:**
  Protects someone from direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
  Also requires an employer to make **reasonable adjustments** for those with a disability

- **The Health and Safety Act 1974**:
  "every employer has a duty to ensure that …the health, safety and welfare of employees are protected". This includes mental and physical health.

- **Common law**:
  Provides for a 'duty of care' for all staff.

Section 1

Menopause and Menstrual Health



Menopause action plans

- 250+ employees
- Set out how an organisation will actively support employees through menopause

What to do now (if you haven't already):

- Consult
- Train managers and all staff
- Consider a menopause risk assessment
- Track progress
- Review policies
- Consider links to other conditions (neurodivergence for example)

Recommended actions

- Train managers to support employees
- Offer Occupational Heath advice
- Set up menopause support groups and networks
- Offer workplace adjustments
- Conduct a menopause risk assessment
- Review policies and procedures to meet the needs of those experiencing menopause

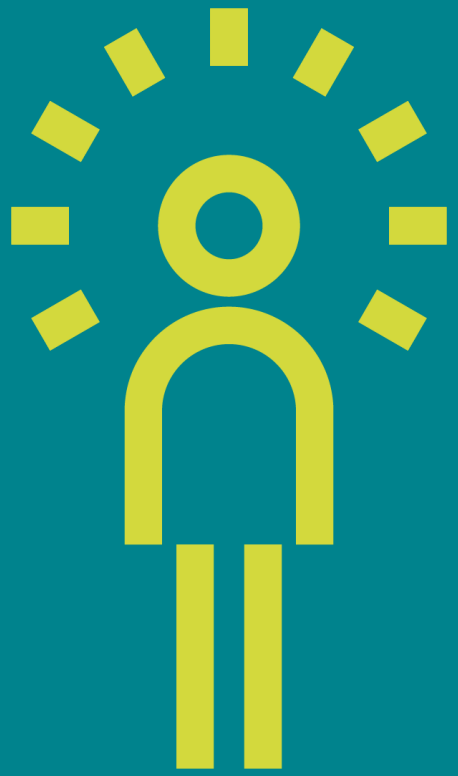
- Step 2. Choose your actions - GOV.UK

Menstrual health

- Periods are a normal part of health and wellbeing
- Symptoms can include cramps, fatigue, headaches and mood changes
- Support access to period products, rest breaks and open conversations.
- Consider OH or EAP referrals
- Paid menstrual leave?
- Amendments to trigger points?
- Reduce stigma
- How to report menstrual absence
- Avoid assumptions and stereotypes
- Some conditions could be defined as disabilities

Section 2

Fertility Treatments and baby loss



What's changing?

April 2027:

Bereavement leave for employees who lose a partner, spouse, parent, adult child or sibling

- **Day one right**
- **Includes pregnancy loss before 24 weeks and unsuccessful IVF embryo transfer**
- **Two weeks unpaid leave**
- **Can be taken in single days or blocks of a week**
- **Can be taken up to 56 weeks after bereavement**

What's changing?

October 2027:

Additional protection from dismissal for pregnant employees, those on maternity leave or anyone who has recently returned from a qualifying period of family leave

- **Day one right**
- **Protected from the point of informing employer of pregnancy**
- **Protection continues for six months after return in most cases**
- **Five fair reasons for dismissal still stand – but must be justified**

Fact and figures

There is no automatic right to take time off work for fertility treatment

1 in 6 couple face fertility challenges in the UK (WHO)

Of those undergoing fertility treatment:

- 68% said treatment affected their career
- 87% reported anxiety or depression directly related
- 61% said they didn't feel comfortable talking to their employer
- 38% have left or considered leaving their job
- 99% said it impacted their mental wellbeing
- 63% took sick leave during their treatment

(Fertility Matters at Work)

The Law

- At embryo transfer stage they have the same rights as other pregnant workers
- It can take several week for a pregnancy test to confirm if the pregnancy is successful
- During this time they have the same legal rights
- If IVF unsuccessful protection continues for 2 weeks after finding out.

Role of Line managers

- Building trusting relationships
- Inclusive environment
- Confidentiality
- Familiar with policy
- Regular conversations – keep records
- Trained on relevant legislation
- Manage the bigger picture – whole team dynamics
- Signpost
- Seem advice from HR

Resources

- Employment Rights Act 2025 – Acas
- IVF treatment - Pregnancy at work – Acas
- Creating an action plan: guidance for employers - GOV.UK
- Creating an action plan: guidance for employers - GOV.UK

Signposts

- Menopause and perimenopause – NHS
- Miscarriage UK | Because Every Loss Matters
- Fertility Matters at Work
- Find information and support | Mental health | Mind
- Workplace support for employees experiencing fertility challenges, investigations or treatment: Survey report
- Managing menopause - Menopause at work – Acas
- Telling an employer - Pregnancy at work - Acas

Further support

