

## World Menopause Day - 18 October 2021

Insights - 18/10/2021

World Menopause Day (18 October) offers an opportunity for employers to reflect on the support given to their employees who are experiencing the menopause and peri-menopause.

The menopause is experienced in different ways. For some, the physical or mental health symptoms can have a significant impact on their ability to perform at work. Recognising this issue in the workplace, and behaving thoughtfully and supportively, can have a positive impact on the ability of any business to retain its most experienced staff.

Common menopause symptoms include (but are not limited to) migraine or headache, lower energy levels, stress or anxiety, low mood, hot flushes, difficulty sleeping and a reduced ability to focus. To help employees manage their symptoms and any impact on their work, employers first need to know what support is needed. Businesses may wish to use this global campaign to start discussions in the workplace, raise awareness among managers, encourage employees to be open about what can be done to help them continue to perform in their role, and clarify what support is available.

Small changes to the working environment can make all the difference for some symptoms, such as adjustments to the office temperature or air conditioning. Other employees may benefit from a flexible working arrangement. Minor adjustments to support employees can help to reduce absence levels and improve staff wellbeing. More fundamental changes may be required to ensure that valuable and knowledgeable staff are retained by the business, such as reviewing policies around performance management and the recording of sickness absence where it relates to menopause symptoms. Not recognising this issue in the workplace may also give rise to discrimination complaints on the grounds of sex, age and potentially disability.

Of course, many of the symptoms are temporary and are not unique to the menopause. In addition, not all women, and not only women, experience the menopause; members of the trans, intersex and non-binary communities may also experience menopause symptoms. A business that demonstrates its commitment to diversity and inclusion and an open and honest culture focussed on staff wellbeing is likely to be attractive to both current and prospective

employees.

If you have any questions about how to update your policies to support those who experience menopause symptoms within your workplace, please contact the Ogier Employment Team who will be happy to assist you.

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