

Menopause awareness in the workplace: Q&A

The following questions were asked as part of the webinar – some questions have been edited for clarity or condensed with others to avoid duplication.

Q: Is there any good menopause awareness training for managers available?

A: NHSE has placed some training on the platform they have for the menopause programme. I haven't been involved so can't comment on its validity etc;

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/menopause-awareness/>

To improve your knowledge of the menopause and how it may affect the workplace there is an e-learning module now at <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/menopause-awareness>

There is a recording of a lived experience from a colleague shared with permissions here; <https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/b63179b9-639e-4689-bda2-1fbc33b590a1?list=studio>

-Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Is HRT safe for someone who has had breast cancer / could HRT cause an increased risk of breast cancer?

A: Breast cancer needs specific discussion, advice and a risk/benefit consideration. Consider the PREDICT tool, consider referral to a menopause clinic and a broad discussion to explore whether the breast cancer is Estrogen Receptive or not. There is a small risk with HRT; there are wider risks for other aspects for anyone choosing not to use HRT though. Diabetes, CVD, osteoporosis, dementia, bowel cancer. Also see the Balance website factsheets developed by Dr Newson. An individual assessment would be needed for each person to consider their own health and benefit versus risks.

-Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Can you take HRT if you smoke?

A: Yes but generally we would advise to stop smoking (as you'll guess I would say).

-Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Do you offer menopause champion training?

A: No, I wouldn't have capacity.

- Jacqui McBurnie

Q: How can I get the team to understand my menopause as a manager - that I may need a minute? Staff mostly younger...

A: Thank you for your question. This depends on how comfortable you are in discussing your own menopause, you may want to watch a podcast by DR Lousie Newson and share with your team in a team meeting that you have attended today's webinar and you want to share the information you have learnt. That is a starting point of discussing this, happy for you to reach out to me directly if it would be helpful to have a chat :)

- Heather Sweeney - National Care Group

Q: How common is testosterone use as part of HRT treatment? How do I find a local clinic that will prescribe me it if my GP won't?

A: Many GPs are recognising the benefits of testosterone right across the NHS. See testosterone here; https://menopausesupport.co.uk/?page_id=16622

Testosterone treatment is very common and covers much, much more than libido, check out the Balance website for more - there's a template letter to send to your GP practice etc

<https://www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library/>

- Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Do men get some form of Male menopause?

A: There are a small proportion of men that experience and struggle with symptoms relating to a reduction/drop in testosterone. It is not all men, it is not defined as a 'male menopause' clinically. It is also responded to with a referral to an endocrinologist for treatment using testosterone etc. It is not experienced by all men.

- Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Are we all entitled to HRT? Or is it a postcode lottery?

A: HRT is prescribed based on the need for that individual to manage symptoms. Although we do have some struggles to get it because of the manufacturers needing to produce more, it should settle down as the production of it increases.

- Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Does HRT offer you the option of different levels of estrogen? Particularly if you are sensitive with regards to the effects it has with nausea?

A: HRT comes on varied doses, it is critical that the dose is managed to carefully meet the needs of the individual.

- Jacqui McBurnie

Q: Could you recommend some websites for staff to use as part of signposting and support following menopause absences?

A: <https://www.balance-menopause.com/> There's also the British Menopause Society website

- Jacqui McBurnie

Q: I am a "mental health first aider" in my workplace and was wondering whether some things that signify me as such (an image on my signature strip and a register available through organisation internal web pages) would be useful to create at least a sense that you can be approached to discuss menopause?

A: Thank you for your question, I think that is a great idea, perhaps you could work with your marketing team to create a poster so people can put a name to a face, understand what your role is as MHFA and topics they can discuss with you such as menopause

Heather Sweeney - National Care Group